

**Our 'messy' mother tongue: Language attitudes among urban Uyghurs  
and desires for 'purity' in the public sphere.**

By

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**Our ‘messy’ mother tongue: Language attitudes among urban Uyghurs  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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This thesis is a qualitative study investigating how ‘purified’ language in Uyghur-language broadcast media is interpreted by Uyghurs living in urban Ürümchi, the regional capital of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China. ‘Purity’ refers to the intentional avoidance of Mandarin Chinese loanwords, otherwise heard often in everyday conversations, but expunged in television news. The participants in my research, urban Uyghurs who received mother-tongue education, viewed ‘pure’ language used in broadcast media as a pedagogical tool, holding it to prescriptive standards not deemed necessary for everyday language practice. Recent education reforms have greatly decreased exposure and use of Uyghur in the classroom, and increased the importance in the work environment to be proficient in Mandarin Chinese. I argue that, as a result, Uyghurs’ language ideologies on mother tongue ‘purity’ in the public sphere have become intensified, as can be seen in broadcast news media and viewers responses to these media.

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## CHAPTER I: SETTING THE SCENE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the ways so-called ‘purified’ language in Uyghur-language broadcast media is interpreted by a Uyghur audience living in urban Ürümqi, the regional capital of Xinjiang in northwest China. ‘Purity’ in this case refers to the intentional avoidance of Mandarin Chinese loanwords, otherwise heard often in everyday conversations, but expunged in television news.

In this study, I focus my research on urban Uyghurs adults who received secondary education in their mother tongue, among Uyghur classmates. The terms *Mín kǎo mín*, lit. ‘Nationality testing Nationality’, and *Mín kǎo Hàn*, lit. ‘Nationality testing Han (Chinese)’, are used by both native Chinese speakers and Uyghurs alike to describe one’s educational background. In 2005, education reforms greatly diminished the use of Uyghur in schools; now, Uyghur students studying among Uyghur students are taught almost entirely in Mandarin Chinese using Mandarin textbooks, aside from four hours a week of mother tongue literature classes. Such changes have affected relations between Uyghurs and the majority Han Chinese, and created discontent among parents and students alike, who see a vanishing of their mother tongue in schools as a threat to their culture. The participants in my research completed their secondary education before or around 2005, and thus received classroom instruction in Uyghur, using Uyghur books for all subjects aside from requisite Mandarin Chinese language classes.

Education reforms are just one component of dramatic change to tangible and intangible components of Uyghur culture. Since the 1940s, the region of Xinjiang has seen a dramatic flux of migrant Han workers and business people, incentivized by

government relocation packages aimed at stabilizing and maintaining control of border regions such as Xinjiang, as well as aimed at developing its economy.

The Han Chinese who came from other regions and provinces in China generally settled in ‘New Town’ areas of already established Uyghur cities, while implicitly Uyghur ‘Old Towns’ remained intact and vibrant. However, the central government’s more recent plans for modernizing Xinjiang has called for destruction (referred to in Chinese media as ‘change’) of Uyghur Old Towns, deemed too unstable to withstand earthquakes, and holding back residents living from modern lives.

Xinjiang, which means ‘new frontier’ in Mandarin Chinese, is both a geopolitically important as well as resource-rich region within China. Indeed, in urban regions of Xinjiang, only 20 percent of the population is Uyghur. In the regional capital of Ürümqi, Uyghurs represent between 10 and 15 percent of the population, mostly living in the southern section of the city (Millward 2000). The dramatic flux of migrant Han workers has also increased the importance of Mandarin Chinese proficiency in the job market, which Uyghurs often view as exclusionary.

*Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs living in Ürümqi represent a minority as well as a vanishing demographic, as upcoming generations will receive considerably less Uyghur-language instruction. While *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs in Ürümqi are proficient in their mother tongue, their spoken Uyghur includes frequent code-mixing of Mandarin Chinese interjections in everyday interactions. Code-mixing is a type of insertional code-switching, where a constituent from one language is inserted into a phrase, while a clearly dominant language is maintained in the overall sentence structure (Hamers and Blanc 2000: 260).

*Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs in Ürümqi code-mix most frequently, I observed, when discussing topics or activities they index as being more tied to Han culture. Although everyday speech incorporates more Mandarin-derived words, an erasure of such an influence is desired by Uyghurs in official representations of Uyghur, as it signals to a ‘purification’ of their mother tongue.

Those I spoke with used the word *sap* 'pure' or *saplinish* 'purify' when describing ideals and representations of the Uyghur language in the public sphere. (“*We need to purify our mother tongue...as it represents our culture and heritage.*”) They also used the word *qalaymiqan* 'messy' frequently when describing changes to their language, including in one conversation that will be discussed below in section 1.1. *Sap*, meaning pure, clean, or untainted, and *qalaymiqan*, meaning disorderly or messy, are not entirely lexical opposites. The idea of ‘disorderly’ language does not render it as necessarily inauthentic or impure. Rather, it reflects the broader cultural scope of contemporary Xinjiang; Uyghurs are increasingly influenced by the Han and by Mandarin Chinese. Although many spatial and cultural boundaries, such as separate and distinctive groups of Han and Uyghur dancing groups who gather in opposite corners of People’s Park in Ürümqi, are upheld, many other boundaries are blurred. Language demands and the increasing number of Han Chinese moving to Xinjiang as a result of the province’s strengthening economy have increased Uyghurs’ interactions with non-Uyghurs on a daily basis. *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs, recognizing the increasing need for proficiency in Mandarin to find jobs and economic stability, often struggle to accept the diminished importance of their mother tongue.



I argue that aforementioned education reforms that decrease mother-tongue instruction, increased pressure in the work environment to be proficient in Mandarin Chinese, as well as region-wide destruction to Uyghur Old Towns have intensified Uyghurs' desires for mother tongue 'purity' in the public sphere, as can be seen in broadcast news media and viewers' responses to these media.

My approach to analyzing Uyghurs' language ideologies and desires for 'purity' in mass media language is three-tiered. First, I conducted ethnographic research over the course of thirteen months in Ürümqi in order to provide substantial sociocultural background. Second, I conducted interviews with nine *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghur adults living in Ürümqi on impressions of 'pure' Uyghur in broadcast media. Third, I analyzed two Uyghur-language broadcast news clips from the regional television station XJTV2 (Xinjiang Television 2), using Critical Discourse Analysis, which examines how overarching changes in society and culture are asserted in changing media discourse practices (Fairclough 1995: 14).

During my time in Xinjiang, I learned of the work of a linguistics professor at Xinjiang Normal University, who is studying code-mixing among Ürümqi-based Uyghur youths. "Language and society are clearly interrelated – this is just what present-day Uyghur is," he said while explaining the increase in Mandarin-derived loanwords. "Twenty or thirty years ago it was nothing at all like this. But society is changing." Economic opportunities are available for Uyghurs, he explained. But it may involve releasing their grasp from desires to speak their mother tongue; it may involve assimilating more than his generation is and was willing.

Below is an anecdote that exemplifies present-day language attitudes and ideologies among urban Uyghurs, specifically regarding their notion of mother tongue ‘purity.’ For this anecdote as well as throughout my thesis, I use initials as pseudonyms for my consultants and friends I mention, as conducting and participating in social science research in Xinjiang is perceived as sensitive.

## 1.2 PURITY AND PRIDE OF A MOTHER TONGUE

M lives with her parents and younger sister in southern Ürümchi, in a predominately Uyghur apartment complex of high-rise buildings. M herself is a ‘bilingual’ high school student, meaning her classmates are all Uyghur, and she receives four hours a week of Uyghur-language instruction in the form of a literature class; all other subjects are taught in Mandarin Chinese using Mandarin textbooks. Her younger sister is *Mín kǎo Hànn* and cannot read or write Uyghur. ‘Bilingual’ students like M also receive four hours a week of English language classes, though English does not receive the same level of emphasis as it does for *Mín kǎo Hànn* or many other students in China, who receive eight to ten hours of English language courses in a school week.

M is fascinated with all things French. Her notebooks for school feature the Eiffel Tower and street scenes of Paris, with standard ‘Chinglish’ expressions such as “*I wish you a happy everyday.*” She once spent an entire weekend making a replica of the Eiffel Tower out of popsicle sticks. M’s mother, G, whom I befriended almost instantaneously upon my arrival in Ürümchi, worries constantly about M’s lack of interest in learning English at school or at language training centers, and M has been quickly surpassed in English ability by her sister, who receives as much as twice the amount of English instruction at school, in addition to language center classes on evenings and weekends. M

is much too enthralled in French and France to consider the economic and educational benefits of learning English, says her mother.

I initially considered M's obsession with France innocent and naïve. But one evening, over a dinner of homemade *leghmen* noodles, fresh *nan* bread, and Turkish rose tea, M revealed a deeper layer of her love for France.

"I've heard," she began slowly, in Uyghur, "that the French are very concerned with keeping their language pure. They're very proud of their language."

M's mother, taking a break from serving everyone, quickly replied, "We are proud of our language, too," referring to Uyghurs.

"No," M said. "Our language is *qalaymiqan* 'messy'. We always use Chinese words when speaking and don't even know the actual Uyghur words for some things anymore."

G smiled at me and laughed softly, offering no rebuttal. M went on to talking about her day with her sister. She initially used the Mandarin Chinese word for elevator (*Diàntī* 电梯), before rethinking her choice of words and summoning a non-Mandarin lexeme.

"*Lifit*, I mean," she said, correcting herself, using a word introduced into Uyghur from Russian, a language which has also heavily influenced Uyghur lexicons, especially during the 1950s and 1960s. However, the word itself is not associated with Mandarin, or Inner China, or generally the antithesis of what Uyghurs consider themselves to be culturally, ethnically, and socially.

What should be considered in the above anecdote is M's mother's quick response to her daughter's initial claims about the purity of French. M said nothing in regards to

Uyghur until her mother's defense of their own language. By reframing and redirecting the conversation, G revealed her own linguistic anxieties that she, unlike her daughter, may not be comfortable expressing or considering. Additionally, M's usage of a Russian-derived word points to a particular definition of 'purity' Uyghurs have of their mother tongue.

### 1.3 PURITY BEYOND LANGUAGE

Desiring some form of purification, be it through mass media language or otherwise, occurs when a group or culture perceives external pressure causing social pollution, or when internal, seemingly contradictory, pressures present themselves in a cultural system, as Mary Douglas explains in *Purity and Danger*. Expecting mass media language to be expunged of Mandarin – and implicitly Han Chinese – influence, may allow Uyghurs “to defy with impunity the hard realities of their social system” (Douglas 1966: 138).

As Uyghurs' social spheres are increasingly encroached upon by Han influences, and as desired spatial and cultural boundaries fade, they seek to strengthen their identity in opposition of the majority Han. Exaggerating differences by seeking social 'purification' between in-group and out-group, create a semblance of order as well “unity in experience” (Douglas 1966: 4). Although everyday speech incorporates Mandarin-derived words, an erasure of such an influence is desired in official representations of Uyghur, as it signals to a 'purification' of not only their mother tongue, but of the typically unavoidable influence of Mandarin and the Han Chinese in everyday life. Desiring a particular form of 'purified' mother tongue is symbolic of a sweeping away of perceived social pollution that stem from religious, historical, and cultural differences

Uyghurs wish highlight between themselves and the Han. Identity formation among Uyghurs stem from exerting themselves in *opposition* to the Han Chinese, more so than in definition of themselves, as Joanne Smith found in her research throughout the early 2000s in Xinjiang (Smith 2002: 161).

In the following section, I provide background of Xinjiang and the Uyghurs in order to richly analyze and account for contemporary rifts between Uyghurs and the Han Chinese of Xinjiang.

#### 1.4 XINJIANG AND THE UYGHURS

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) is a region in the far northwest of China, covering 1/6 of China's total landmass. It borders eight countries, including Russia and India, and is geographically considered a part of Central Asia. The 2000 Chinese census recorded the population at approximately 18 million, and that number has steadily grown as a result of migrant Han Chinese, whose population within Xinjiang have increased twenty-fold since the early 1950s (Dwyer 1998: 70, Millward 2000: 122). The region was long predominantly Turkic-speaking and Muslim; today, this group is represented by the Uyghurs (pronounced *WEE-gur* in English) The modern Uyghurs are most closely related in language and culture to Uzbeks. Both Uzbek and Uyghur are southeastern Turkic languages, and both claim roots to Chagatay, the medieval lingua franca of Central Asia (Dwyer 2005: 12).

In 1941, Uyghurs comprised 80 percent of Xinjiang's population; the Han Chinese made up only 5 percent of the region's population. Numerically smaller ethnolinguistic groups such as Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Saryqoli ("Tajik"), Tatar and Mongolian made up the remaining fifteen percent. By 1990, however, the Han had very nearly caught up to the

Uyghurs in population statistics, with 47 percent Uyghur and 38 percent Han (Millward 2000: 123). While ethnic Uyghurs are still the majority in rural Xinjiang, only 20 percent of the urban population, is Uyghur (Millward 2000: 123). Street signs now accommodate Mandarin speakers, with large Mandarin characters topped by barely visible Uyghur script. (Uyghurs refer to their language being the “eyebrows” above the Chinese characters (Dwyer 2005: 73). The great majority of governmental affairs in Xinjiang are conducted in Mandarin instead of Uyghur, and education reforms of the last decade have created anxiety among *Mín kǎo mín* adults in the regional capital about the course of their mother tongue.

Efforts to encourage the use of Mandarin among Uyghur populations started out slowly following the founding of the People's Republic of China, as the new government sought to gain the trust of the country's 56 minority (*mínzu*) groups (Blanchford 2004: 110). In the early 1950s, Beijing sent language survey teams to remote areas populated by minority cultures for the first time, to gain an understanding of their Mandarin Chinese capacity, as well as to gauge their willingness to implement Mandarin Chinese requirements in education and administrative activities (Dwyer 1998: 70). Ethnic identification in the 1950s also marked the beginnings of modern ethnographic and linguistic studies of China's minority groups by local and national researchers (Dwyer 2005: 15).

The creation of a Latin-based orthography for Mandarin, referred to as *pinyin*, made learning and understanding the language more accessible to non-native speakers who had not been educated in Mandarin, thereby being less proficient in reading and writing Chinese characters. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, efforts were also made to

employ pinyin-based writing systems for unwritten minority languages. In the 1960s, even for those languages with their own writing systems, the Chinese Communist Party employed the Latin-based pinyin scripts for minority languages such as Uyghur and Kazakh. This policy was an effort to more closely align and encourage minority speakers with Standard Mandarin Chinese, promulgated in China as *Pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 'the common language.'

However, the modern Uyghur Perso-Arabic script – adopted in Chinese Turkestan from the 10th century onwards – was allowed to remain an acceptable written form of Uyghur alongside *pinyin*, as poverty and low literacy rates made it impossible to wholly implement the change to *pinyin* within Xinjiang. (Dwyer 2005: 60). During the Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1977) efforts to protect and maintain minority languages and cultures decreased significantly. Instead, efforts to instill pan-Chinese nationalism ensued. The return of the Arabic-based script only came in the mid-1980s, during a period of liberalization.

The late 1990s saw a reversal of many of the linguistic and religious freedoms that came in the comparatively liberal 1980s. By the early 2000s, the global 'war on terror' and the prominent discourse inciting fear of the Muslim world resulted in the U.S. (swayed by Chinese media discourse) aligning Uyghurs with Islamic extremism (Dwyer 2005: 3). Ürümqi received international attention on July 5, 2009, as tensions among ethnic Uyghurs and Han Chinese erupted; days of street violence and uncontrollable riots ensued, in an event described by Uyghurs and native Mandarin speakers alike, as *qi-wu* '7-5' in Mandarin, referring to the initial date of the riots.

## 1.5 ETHNOGRAPHIC TENSIONS

I arrived in Ürümchi in February 2011. Winter in Ürümchi did not present me with a fabulous first impression, and yet, I immediately felt at home. Xinjiang is a key coal-producing region for China, and from December to the end of March, the air is thick with dust and coal. Ice blankets the city for nearly the entire winter. Streets are not salted, at least not in the southern part of the city, which is where the majority of Uyghurs reside.

The divide between the northern (and Han-populated) and southern sections of the city is drastic. The streets of neighborhoods south of People's Square feature Islam-influenced architecture, with mosque spires visible above the cityscape. Streets in the south are lined with hanging slabs of fresh mutton; at dawn, sheep slaughtering takes place prior to the morning market crowd. Popular food stalls cook up Xinjiang's famous kabobs, and small restaurants sell freshly made *polu*, a Central Asian pilaf with carrots and mutton, and *legghan* -- hand-pulled noodles topped with vegetables and mutton. Interestingly, the root of the word *legghmen* comes from the Mandarin word *lā miàn* (拉面 'stretched noodles'). Uyghurs will, however, debate the word's etymology. They say that the word *legghmen* is most certainly Uyghur, and not one of those pesky food words that have entered into Uyghur from Mandarin. According to them, *legghmen* so deeply entrenched in the language that many Uyghurs may not remember the term that preceded the Mandarin loanword.

Spatial and culture boundaries between the Han and the Uyghurs exist in myriad ways in Ürümchi, and serve as tangible representation of the present-day relations between Uyghurs and Han in Ürümchi. Within the vast People's Park, dancing groups convene in opposite sides of the park. While the Han Chinese profess to love Uyghur



dancing and music, and enjoy it in large groups in public spaces, the Han and Uyghur dancers simply do not intermingle. The Uyghurs have their own group dancing session farther north in the park. Such scenes are indicative of the Hans' desire to partake in packaged representations of 'Uyghur-ness' as is propagated in mass media – Uyghurs are often portrayed as dancers, musicians, and artisans – while still upholding spatial and symbolic boundaries. In a similar vein, Han taxi drivers may refuse to take in potential customers who need a ride to southern Ürümchi. Although the southern section of the city, with its long, narrow, one-way routes, is infamous for traffic jams, much of this refusal stems from fear of crossing imagined boundaries, as tensions between the Han and Uyghurs have become intensified following the series of violent riots that took place on those same narrow, one-way streets.

During my first three months in Ürümchi, I embraced local fashion and often wore a headscarf, common among Muslim women, although somewhat less prevalent among urban Uyghur women in Ürümchi. I chose to dress like this partly because I enjoyed being mistaken for a Central Asian as opposed to an American or Russian. Indeed, large gold earrings, a headscarf, enough sparkle on my clothes, and a pair of clean black shoes (with at least somewhat of a heel) allowed me to sometimes pass as a local. I also did this as a way to announce that I was not the type of foreigner Uyghurs had grown accustomed to in recent years – one of the many Christian missionaries who had come to Ürümchi in recent years. Many Uyghurs had been given Bibles during the past couple years, as Uyghur translations are now available. In my mind, wearing a headscarf would differentiate me from that crowd.

Although I wasn't automatically considered to be a missionary, I was frequently asked what exactly my reasons were for being in Ürümchi, learning Uyghur at an unheralded arts college, without any interest in music or dance, the school's specialties. If I wasn't a missionary, what was I?

The first time I was asked was in a Uyghur hat stop in Kucha, about a 13-hour bus ride southwest of Ürümchi. I was often able to use my ability to speak Uyghur to my advantage, as few Uyghurs would assume a foreigner knew the language. This knowledge came in handy when trying to decipher what was a fair price in shops, where haggling is commonplace. I'd listen in on a local's attempt to bargain so I would be able to begin with an acceptable price in mind. That's what I did in the Kucha hat shop. I finally spoke up once the customer before me seemed final in his price, and the owner reacted with shock when I spoke to him in Uyghur. He stared at me for a few uncomfortable seconds, and asked point-blank if I were a foreign journalist. I shook my head quickly, surprised and confused by his question. "Well, what are you doing here, then?" he persisted.

"Studying Uyghur," I responded. It was not necessary to explain myself as I would have done in the United States, I learned. If I included in answers to general questions about myself that I didn't know Chinese particularly well, excitement would ensue. Some people, mostly men, surprisingly, would even well up. Not all had such a glowing response, however, as some were not satisfied with the brevity of my answer.

In fact, I had come to Ürümchi to study Uyghur on a Foreign Language Area Studies fellowship (FLAS), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and awarded through the University of Kansas' Center of Global and International Studies for the

2010-2011 Academic Year. I was fortunate enough to receive another FLAS for the following year, as well, this time through the Center for East Asian Studies at KU. I first became interested in Uyghur through my advisor Dr. Arienne Dwyer, who assisted me greatly during my first year of graduate school in the Anthropology Department. I had a background in neither Anthropology nor Linguistics, yet I was seeking a MA in Linguistic Anthropology. In fact, my undergraduate degree was in Journalism. Thus, when asked over and over during my three semesters in Ürümqi if I were a journalist, or a writer, or a person in the media (all of which conjured varying levels of suspicion for Uyghurs), and when I responded, “no,” I felt somewhat dishonest. I was *not* engaging in journalistic work in China. But what if I were to in the future? Would my connections and friendships be severed? Would my friends be put at risk?

These were the kinds of questions that swirled in my mind with essentially every interaction in Ürümqi. I constantly battled a desire to know more about people I met, or to let them know more about me, but always be mindful that one question too far, from either myself or a friend, could lead to more than just awkwardness. This was a city that had just installed 40,000 new cameras through the city streets in order to prevent social disturbances. Phone calls were tapped, and text messages could be easily intercepted. The ‘Great Firewall’ extends beyond the World Wide Web. Doing social science research was virtually impossible.

Mindful of this, I merely made friends, observed, and asked questions. I spent the first semester taking 18 hours a week of Uyghur classes through Xinjiang Arts Institute. I also hired a tutor for an additional four hours a week, whom I refer to as S throughout my thesis. She is a 22-year-old college student with a knack for explaining complicated

grammar points, and a passion for teaching Uyghur to both foreigners and young Uyghur children who weren't receiving the same style of language education that her generation had. S became one of my closest friends there, and someone from whom I learned a great deal.

Before I moved to Ürümchi, Dr. Dwyer had explained to me an interesting phenomenon she was seeing on Uyghur-language Radio Free Asia broadcasts out of Washington, D.C. Uyghur words seldom heard in everyday conversation were replacing words derived from Mandarin Chinese that had long been integrated into the language, as the anecdote with M touched upon in section 1.1. It's also happening in Xinjiang itself, which presents an interesting dichotomy. Government-controlled broadcast media – as all media is in China – is being purged of Mandarin loanwords heard and used frequently and with ease in everyday conversations. The government has also implemented regional education reforms that have significantly decreased access to Uyghur-language instruction and materials, a shift that has naturally had ramifications in social arenas outside the classroom, as Mandarin language proficiency has become much more of a *de facto* qualification for access to higher education and jobs.

This research is encapsulated in a period of time in which ethnic tensions and educational reforms have created greater divides between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. My choice to focus on *Mín kǎo mín* initially stemmed from my ability to commentate on extensive ethnographic research, during which I interacted the majority of the time with adults who had been educated in their mother tongue. However, upon formulating my analysis and arguments, I was struck by crucial connections between their thoughts on

education reforms, and the stated importance of employing Mandarin-free Uyghur in the public sphere.

## 1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In my thesis, I aim to answer the following questions: How are the regional media's 'purified' Uyghur language choices interpreted by Uyghur viewers in Ürümqi, a predominately Han city where Uyghur speakers themselves generally interject Mandarin in their everyday speech? How have recent changes to material and nonmaterial components of Uyghur culture affected both language practice and language ideology?

Chinese media serves as a mouthpiece for the Communist Party, and the government closely vets all news articles. Language and translation decisions are influenced by the government as well as the Xinjiang Language and Script Committee, which puts forth recommendations and regulations pertaining to neologisms, loanwords, and script usage, and translation issues, thus forming a standardized Uyghur language in the public sphere. Efforts to 'purify' Uyghur language in the mass media do not stem from the general public, but from a regional committee. However, as Douglas expressed in the book *Purity and Danger*, "by and large the private conscience and the public code of morals influence one another continually" (Douglas 1966: 161). Efforts to rid mass media language of Mandarin influence may serve as a method for disguising Sinocentric elements or ideological messages, which undermines Uyghurs' everyday spoken practices as flawed. However, Uyghurs themselves expect and demand of speakers in broadcast news to employ Mandarin-free Uyghur for reasons beyond communicative means.

## 1.7 KEY CONCEPTS

The methodology I chose, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, examines how overarching changes in society and culture are “manifest in changing media discourse practices” (Fairclough 1995: 14). Wodak’s approach Critical Discourse Analysis, in particular, emphasizes analyzing transparent as well as disguised relationships between a discourse and dominance, discrimination, and power (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 2).

*Discourse* can be defined as spoken or written language, as well as non-verbal communication such as gestures or visual images in a television broadcast (Fairclough 1995: 18). A discourse is always subsumed to be embedded in particular social contexts.

Along with employing CDA to two broadcast news clips, I conducted interviews on language ideologies and notions of mother tongue ‘purity’ with nine adult Uyghurs living in Ürümqi. *Language ideologies* are “beliefs or feelings about languages as used in their social worlds” (Kroskrity 2004: 497). Language ideology within a speaking community can manifest itself in any number of ways, be it code-switching or code-mixing in celebration of shared multi-ethnicity among diaspora groups, or avoidance of loanwords from a region’s dominant language (Kroskrity 2004: 500).

Similarly, *language prescriptivism* can be defined as advocating for one type of speaking a language over another (or others), and implicitly identifies other varieties of speaking as ‘incorrect.’ Language prescriptivism often relates to the idea of linguistic purity, as is the case for Uyghurs and their desire for expunging language in the public sphere of Mandarin Chinese influence.

## SUMMARY

In this section, I have outlined my research questions, provided a background of my role and experiences as an ethnographer in Ürümchi, and introduced key concepts to my research and methodology. I have provided also background on the Uyghurs and Xinjiang, as well as contemporary cultural and linguistic issues Uyghurs face.

In Chapter 2, I review literature on Critical Discourse Analysis, code-mixing, and language ideology, along with Xinjiang-specific research on education and language reform history. Also included in the chapter is literature related to mass media in China. In Chapter 3, I describe my methodology, and in Chapter 4, I present my findings and analysis of ethnographic data, interviews with Ürümchi-based adults, and two Uyghur-language broadcast news clips. In Chapter 5, I present my conclusions.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this literature review is two-fold. First, I analyze applicable methodologies of Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA), language ideology, and code-mixing as related to media discourse. My second purpose is to use CDA framework to gain insights into the current sociopolitical and linguistic situation in Xinjiang. This literature review provided a springboard for original research, as well as a complementary tool for ethnographic fieldwork I engaged in for a total of thirteen months in the regional capital.

I have divided this chapter into five sections. Section 2.1 covers regional language planning, and how it affects Uyghur media and education. In section 2.2 I review contemporary ethnographic research on Xinjiang and Uyghurs. In section 2.3, I review literature on language ideology and code-mixing in other multilingual societies and perceptions of ‘purity’ in media language. In section 2.4, I review literature on Critical Discourse Analysis used to inform my methods. In section 2.5 I review research on the role the media play for the Chinese Communist Party and its audience.

### **2.1 LANGUAGE REFORMS, EDUCATION, AND MEDIA**

At the heart of present-day and recent anxiety about language and cultural heritage loss among Uyghurs are the education reforms of the 2000s. These resulted in the ending of classes conducted in the Uyghur language and their replacement by classes in Standard Mandarin, firstly at the university level, and followed shortly thereafter by secondary schools across the province. Before 2005, in many locales, separate schools



existed for minority students and Chinese students. ("Minority" schools in Xinjiang were largely but not exclusively Uyghur). All coursework was conducted in students' mother tongue, with minority students learning Chinese beginning in grade 3. Presently, Uyghur students are only educated in their mother tongue in literature classes. Even university-level Uyghur poetry classes have been conducted in Chinese since 2002 (Dwyer 2005: 40).

Shortly after PRC was founded in 1949, officially recognized minorities enjoyed fairly open access to mother tongue education. Though the Cultural Revolution saw burning of books and the temporary shutdown of schools across the region, the 1980s were a time of relaxed cultural expression. Uyghur students of all ages attended classes conducted in Uyghur, and also had four hours of Mandarin education per week. Officially, Han Chinese students attended four hours a week of Uyghur class, as well (Schluessel 2007: 255). It was during this time that affirmative action for college admission was implemented; schools and academic apartments had a quota of minority student spaces to be filled within each academic major.

During the 1980s, textbooks used by Uyghur students to learn Mandarin were modified to increase the speed of fluency so that by the end of the decade a student could attain Mandarin fluency at the end of middle school. This textbook reform was the first sign of coming changes that would elevate the importance of Mandarin in education and in business. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, implementing 'bilingual' education was a popular topic of discussion among government officials in Xinjiang. The concept of 'bilingual' did not entail supporting both languages; the goal was more so for minorities to attain Mandarin fluency as quickly as possible, at the detriment to education quality in

their mother tongue (Dwyer 1998, Sautman 1997, Schluessel 2007). In 2004, the region's education bureau introduced new laws and goals that would comprise bilingual education. Change rapidly ensued, and the year 2005 marked the end of separate minority and Han schools. Uyghur parents were still given what could be perceived as options. Their child could be placed in an all-Uyghur classroom and be enrolled in a Uyghur literature class (conducted in Uyghur). In Mandarin, this student is called *Mín kǎo mín* (民考民, literally 'Nationality testing Nationality'); in other words, minority students learning among other minority students. Or, the parent could opt to place their child in the fast-paced Chinese class, where every subject would be conducted in Mandarin Chinese. This kind of minority student is called *Mín kǎo Hàn* (民考汉, literally 'Nationalities testing Han').<sup>1</sup>

Paradoxically, the same regional and national government bodies that are pushing for less Uyghur in education are also stepping in to alleviate the amount of Mandarin loanwords used in region-wide television and radio broadcasts. As one of my consultants argued, language must be accessible to those in rural areas of Xinjiang, where the influence of Mandarin Chinese may not be as strong. However, sometimes Uyghurs in Ürümqi (and likely elsewhere) actually do not understand all of the words used in the broadcast, and rely heavily on accompanying visual elements to grasp certain words' meanings.

In the spring of 2012, a seldom-used word for 'mushroom' entered into Uyghur-language media, at the recommendation of the Xinjiang Language and Script Committee. In spoken Uyghur, typically the Mandarin term *mógu*, 蘑菇 'mushroom' is used. But

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<sup>1</sup> For recent research entailing effects of educational choice among Uyghur families, see Wilson 2012

often, the term *gumbemedek* appeared in newspaper articles and television broadcasts. Even a linguistics professor at Xinjiang Normal University did not know the meaning of the word when I quizzed him. Such an anecdote points to the need to explore how these kinds of changes in Uyghur mass media is viewed by Uyghurs educated in their mother tongue, but whose daily interactions have changed as a result of language requirements in the work place, on the streets of Ürümqi, and among peers whose education backgrounds and competency in Uyghur may vary.

The effects of regional language reforms go beyond the classroom. During the 1960s and 1970s, Mandarin-derived loanwords were strictly enforced in the public sphere, including in mass media, as neologisms were introduced for Uyghur, as well as for Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations living in China (Dwyer 2005: 28). Writers and editors in the 1990s used a number of Chinese loanwords for technology and administrative terms. Beyond specific Mandarin Chinese loanword rules, Uyghur broadcast media suffers from what Dwyer refers to as “governmentese” that does not reflect contemporary Uyghur. In fact, beginning in the 1990s over half of minority-language broadcast media was simply repackaged Chinese-language media (Dwyer 2005: 49).

Though broadcast hours and percentage of “translatese” programs have changed little since the 1990s and early 2000s, the usage of Chinese loanwords in present-day Uyghur media has reportedly diminished greatly. My thesis examines how the decrease in Chinese loanwords affects the Uyghur media audiences.

The Xinjiang Language and Script Committee (*Xinjiang Til va Yeziq Komiti*) plays a role in setting and maintaining guidelines for the province’s minority language media

programs. Aside from outlining formalities of language change and usage, the committee has also recommended a number of script changes. Based on central government policy, in the 1980s the use of a Latin-based script was ended. (This *yengi yeziqi* 'new script' was based on the *pinyin* Latin script used for Chinese, and employed during the Cultural Revolution in an effort to familiarize minorities with *pinyin* (also Latin-based) script for Mandarin.) In 1984, official Uyghur reverted back to a modified Perso-Arabic-based script (*kona yeziqi* 'old script'), which had been in use from 1949 until 1956 (Kamberi 2005:10).

Knowledge of script history as well as current script usage of *kona yeziqi* 'old script' is important for my thesis because, quite often, *Mín kǎo Hàn* Uyghurs cannot read or write *kona yeziqi*. This affects media consumption patterns among those who have never learned *kona yeziqi* in school or from their parents. *Mín kǎo mín* generally view this as depressing, worrisome, and a sign of lazy parenting. Such divisions point to rifts among Uyghurs themselves, which stem largely from education choices, and hence choices to preserve or potentially abandon their mother tongue.

## 2.2 CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL IDENTITY

Xinjiang, though socially a very friendly place, provides the foreign research with somewhat of a hostile work environment, and it remains one of the most politically sensitive regions in China. The scholars cited below adjusted, through both informal methodology and interviews, or approaching their research with seemingly politically neutral subject matters. By doing so, they have created a rich and timely mosaic of

21<sup>st</sup>- century Uyghur identity in the face of political, linguistic, and social change. These studies all took place before 2008, whereas my own research took place following the 7-5 riots of 2009.

The dichotomization among Uyghurs of their group and the Hans (*Us versus Them*) is due partly to the region's rapid changes. In the article "Making Culture Matters," Joanne Smith noted that "it is not religio-cultural difference per se that lie at the root of increased tensions between Uyghurs and Han Chinese, but the changing social, political, and economic contexts" (Smith 2002: 153). Contemporary Uyghur identity stresses *difference* between them as a collective, unified group, and the majority Han, hence upholding an "imagined common history," an idea which itself is heavily influenced by Han hegemony (Smith 2002: 155). Symbolic and spatial boundaries are amplified by Uyghurs in identity formation, often more so in *opposition* of the Han instead of in *definition* of themselves. I described in my introduction the spatial boundaries in public parks in Ürümchi with the separate dancing groups. Smith's research, too, focuses on spatial boundaries such as the divides between Old and New Towns, distinct districts within one city that are often separated by open road and other geographical, structural, and demographic differences. Typically, ethnic Uyghurs occupy Old Town, where as New Town has been built to accommodate migrant Han Chinese. In some cities, including Ürümchi, such gaps have diminished in recent years. What is critical to my own research is how such oppositional identity formation is expressed during analyses of broadcast media clips about Uyghurs, as well as overall language attitudes of public versus private sphere discourses.

In Nimrod Baranovitch's 2007 research on identity formation, he surveyed 150 Uyghur university students about their thoughts on two decidedly different Uyghur pop music artists. The first artist, Askar, attended all-Chinese school and cannot read or write Uyghur, but his lyrics contain undertones of Uyghur separatism. The second singer, Erkin, grew up in Qeshqer, was educated in his mother tongue, and was not proficient in Chinese until adulthood. And yet his lyrics do not contain tones of discontent or nationalist ideas. Instead, his packaging of CDs and promotional materials are full of images of camels, deserts, and other stereotypical notions of Uyghur identity, as supported and reified by the Chinese government. In contrast with what Smith's study would lead us to believe, Baranovitch found an overwhelming preference for Erkin's exotic ethnic escapism among Uyghur university students. The results of his survey also reveal his and other Uyghurs' fears of expressing feelings of discontent toward the Han and the government. Baranovitch does not necessarily view this as a decline in ethnic resistance, but rather "a deep silencing:"

"On the contrary, it suggests that the strong resistance of the former decade has been gradually replaced by pragmatic adaptation to the existing political and economic order. It also implies that the regime of combining harsh political repression with economic incentives, propaganda and "soft" techniques of cultural manipulation is working, at least for the time being" (Baranovitch 2007: 79).

While Uyghurs may be weary of associating with politically infused materials, other ways of expressing identity exist in more neutral forms (Erkin 2010: 420). Middle-class Uyghurs living in Ürümchi use their purchasing power to decrease their alignment with Chinese-made or Chinese-influenced products, and increase their alignment with products from the Central Asian republics and Turkey. Uyghurs now have a choice when purchasing items such as food products, household items, and music CDs. During my

time living in southern Ürümchi, I noticed a drastic influx of Turkish, Russian, and Central Asian products sold in specialty stores and supermarkets.

Adila Erkin interviewed Ürümchi-based Uyghurs in the southern portion of the city, which is more Uyghur than other regions of Ürümchi in terms of both feel and population. Several *halal* supermarket chains now dot the city and whole region. Erkin explains that Uyghurs' strengthened desire to align themselves with products, and hence cultures, outside of China, stems from ways in which the government has dealt with the cultural, linguistic, and religious differences of Xinjiang's ethnic groups. Because of suppressed religious or cultural activities, and rapid regional development, urban Uyghurs feel increasingly stifled, she found. This suppression, and other political moves such as official bans on politically sensitive Uyghur history books, strengthens Uyghurs' sense of identity in opposition with the Han.

Avoiding Chinese products, but not rejecting aligning themselves with products, and implicitly cultures, outside of China, is similar in nature to Uyghurs' definitions and qualifications of 'pure' mother tongue in the public sphere. However, as the following section highlights, the incorporation of Mandarin words in everyday speech is viewed as natural, normal, and acceptable.

### **2.3 LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND CODE-MIXING**

Language ideologies are "beliefs or feelings about languages as used in their social worlds" (Kroskrity 2004: 497). Language ideology within a speaking community can manifest itself in any number of ways, be it code-switching or code-mixing in celebration of shared multi-ethnicity among diaspora groups, or avoidance of loanwords from a region's dominant language (Kroskrity 2004: 500).

As mentioned in the introduction, *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs incorporate code-mixing in their everyday speech. I used Hamers and Blanc's definition of code-mixing, which they (and I) view as different than code-switching. They described code-mixing as a type of insertion code-switching, where a constituent from one language is inserted into an utterance in a clearly dominant language that is maintained in the overall sentence structure (Hamers and Blanc 2000: 260). Uyghur is the dominant language in this case, with insertions from Mandarin Chinese occurring within a clause. Below is an example, with insertion of Mandarin Chinese bolded:

*Mening telfonim **guenji**, shunga sizge **duenshin** ewetelmidim.*

My (cell) phone **shut down**, so I wasn't able to send you a **text message**.

Analyzing code-mixing is highly complicated, due to overlapping sociocultural, political, and historical processes within a community. Several recent studies on code-mixing and code-switching, including those of Gardner-Chloros, Auer, and Jaffe, point toward an indexical influence on word choice. The practice of code-mixing must be "interpreted with reference to culturally specific associations, values and relationships" (Jaffe 2007a: 43). For Uyghurs, indexing of certain activities with Han Chinese culture may result in an increased frequency of code-mixing when discussing such topics. Auer (2005) described code-switching and code-mixing as being "categorized by members as an index of some extralinguistic social category" (Auer 2005: 403). In Chapter 4, I analyze specific code-mixing tendencies for urban Uyghurs who have been educated in their mother tongue.

Language ideology is created and reinforced through mass media, and national ideals of unity and ethnic diversity can collide, as shown by Spitulnik regarding Zambia (Spitulnik 1998: 168). Spitulnik's research focused specifically how two seemingly



conflicting national ideals of unity and the promotion of ethnic diversity collide, with “the possibility of ideological implosion” (Spitulnik 1998: 168). Her research is of particular relevance to analyzing mass media in China because of the multilingual nature of Zambia’s radio stations discussed in her work. That both Zambian media and Chinese media allot relatively significant airtime to the countries’ respective minority languages is somewhat in contradiction with their simultaneous concern of strengthening national unity (Spitulnik 1998: 170).

In Zambia’s case, allotting only a few of the country’s 70-plus languages airtime created tension. Radio stations’ names were also a site of contested ideology, in that, in the audience’s opinion, the names implied colonialist importance of the English language. Additionally, the subject matter of respective radio stations rendered Zambian language broadcasts as a ‘cultural reservoir,’ whereas English was rendered an economic or scientific reservoir. The use of these minority languages, as well as the way in which they are used and portray culture have ideological implications as well, in that holding up specific dialects of specific languages naturally undermine others not included. As Irvine and Gal argued, the standardization of minority languages “displays semiotic property of *fractal recursion* that is central in making many other kinds of linguistic difference” thereby deeming speakers own speech as “inadequate and perhaps inauthentic from the perspective of that new standard” (Irvine and Gal 2000).

Beyond tensions surrounding linguistic exclusion, ideological implications of media language also include the perceived valuation of ‘purification’ of a language in the public sphere. ‘Purified’ speech is often the most repeated linguistic aspiration among speakers of a minority language represented in mass media, as Jaffe (1999, 2007) found

among Corsicans in France. Readers and listeners aren't interested in hearing speech that was as imperfect as their own; they expected and "sought better versions of it," like Berbers in Morocco (Hoffman 2008: 200). In *We Share Walls*, Hoffman described the purging of Arabic and French borrowings in Tashelhit mass media in Berber Morocco, noting that "nostalgia" for an untainted mother tongue is only part of the appeal. Rather, such purified media, which included the incorporation of neologisms, "bolstered claims of...marginalized groups" (Hoffman 2008: 200). Attention to language use in the mass media was highest in news programs, where the focus is less on language as a tool, but as a symbol of rootedness and identity. Listeners expected announcers to be skilled speakers and well versed in 'pure' Tashelhit.

Jaffe's research on Corsican-language mass media in France also highlighted the desires among minority speakers for mother tongue purity in the mass media, despite frequent code-switching that occurred in the private sphere. People working on Corsican-language mass media enacted calques or neologisms, as mass media acted as a filter or sorts for expunging French from texts. Jaffe researched language attitudes among Corsicans toward formal program (such as news broadcasts, in which scripts were pre-meditated) and informal programs, such as radio call-in programs or talk shows, and found viewers and listeners of formal programs are held to higher standards and were expected to use 'purified' speech. Such speech, for Corsicans, "challenges diglossic associations of Corsican with informal, private, and non-institutional domains" (Jaffe 2006: 70). Diglossia, a relationship between languages in which one is historically subordinate (Jaffe 2007b: 69) affects Uyghurs' desires for purity in the mass media, as use of their language is decreasing in education and work sectors.

Everyday spoken Uyghur and language used in the mass media discourse in Xinjiang contrast because Turkic Uyghur words (or Uyghur words derived from Russian, Persian, Arabic, or English) are replacing previously used Chinese loanwords in the public sphere. Much like Corsican-language mass media in France, and Tashelhit-language media in Morocco, mass media acts as a filter for minority-language programs, ridding speech not necessarily of all loanwords, but of loanwords derived from the perceived dominant regional language.

#### **2.4 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND POWER**

Discourse analysis entails analyzing a form of language use – be it written, spoken, non-verbal, or visual communication. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines discourse within the context it was produced. Critical Discourse Analysis of the media is concerned with showing how changing language and discursive practices in the mass media signal or perhaps reflect social and cultural change (Fairclough 1995: 20). Three concepts inherent to Critical Discourse Analysis are power, history, and ideology; mass media can be a particular source of power struggle (Wodak and Meyer 2001: 7). Ruth Wodak defines CDA as “concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in language” (Wodak and Meyer 2001: 2). Wodak and Martin Reisigl developed a valuable methodology called the *discourse-historical approach* of Critical Discourse Analysis. They suggest that the researcher must acquire a rich knowledge of the local sociopolitical and historical issues at play in order to fully and critically analyze a discourse (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 31). This rich knowledge can be obtained by what Wodak and Reisigl label the *triangulatory approach* (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 40). Beyond the immediate

written or spoken discourse itself, a discourse should analyze potential intertextual relationships between other discourses and genres of communication. In addition, extralinguistic features such as social and sociological conditions that exist in a specific context should be analyzed, along with the broader sociopolitical and historical context of a situation (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 41)

DHA is also concerned with several forms of critique. *Text immanent critique* aims at “discovering inconsistencies, (self-) contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the text-internal or discourse-internal structures” (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 32). The *socio-diagnostic critique* involves noting potential manipulative discursive practices (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 65). The *prognostic critique* aims to improve the communication efforts, i.e. identifying problematic (and solutions for) language barriers between groups. For my own research, my consultants’ responses to the two media clips help inform the *prognostic critique*.

The flagship study for the discourse-historical approach is Wodak and Reisigl’s 2001 research on anti-Semitic discourse in the Austrian media, primarily during the 1999 presidential elections. They analyzed a wide range of sources, including political speeches, legal documents, newspaper articles, and broadcast news clips, in order to situate and understand anti-Semitic discourse.

The authors found that nationalist, racist discourses typically contain at least four types of discursive strategies:

1. Constructive strategies: to construct national identities/narratives
2. Preservative/justificatory strategies: to conserve and reproduce those national identities/narratives

3. Transformative strategies: to change national identities/narratives
4. Destructive strategies: to dismantle existing national identities/narratives

In my own analysis I aim to uncover such potential strategies used by the Chinese government in maintaining nationalist identities of the Uyghurs, as well as dismantling existing circulating narratives Uyghurs may have about themselves.

These devices could not be unveiled or analyzed without a proper understanding of the historical and sociopolitical context. I provide such contexts through ethnographic analysis in Chapter 4, which covers historical and contemporary issues related to housing and education reforms – the two topics of my broadcast media clips.

Critical Discourse Analysis also involves the study of semiotic processes, a “study of sign relationships, including the iconic, the indexical, and the symbolic” (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37). Irvine and Gal list three semiotic processes common to language ideologies: *iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure*. The process of *iconization* links a sign relationship between particular linguistic features and the broader social images with which they are associated. Iconicity in the mass media reinforces signs or symbols potentially shared by a social group. In their landmark study on Balkan language ideology, Irvine and Gal explained that iconization in the mass media contributed to perceptions that Macedonian were “uncultivated country bumpkins” by portraying the language as having no real grammar (Irvine and Gal 2000: 69). This is also related to *erasure* in the mass media, an ideological strategy that ignores or erases particular groups of people or shared ideas among a people, rendering them voiceless and invisible in the name of upholding ideologies that support the dominant group’s desired position. In the case of Uyghur-language mass media, certain themes such as the need for financial help

or cultural modernization are upheld and circulated in broadcast news items, as I discuss in Chapter 4.

The third process, *fractal recursivity*, projects perceived opposition that creates (or recreates) group identity and is repeatedly reproduce to maintain such opposition (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37). For example, many language reformers for Balkan languages have attempted to purge the literary (and public sphere) discourse of loanwords from Turkish, which, along with Greek, influenced the region's languages as a result of heavy-handed Ottoman rule. Purification efforts such as these made such lexical influences "seem alien, despite their pervasiveness in colloquial speech" (Irvine and Gal 2000: 71), thus recursively distinguished as 'foreign.' The process of expunging Turkish lexical items is similar to efforts in Xinjiang to expunge public discourse and mass media texts of Mandarin loanwords, which, too, are used frequently and with ease in everyday conversations.

National narratives in the mass media controlled by the government, meanwhile, play a critical role in shaping and maintaining these individual ideologies. As part of the oppositional discourse of Uyghur identity formation (see section 2.2), ideological "in-group" and "out-group" representations frequently occur in news articles (van Dijk 1995). In his chapter "Power in the News Media," van Dijk analyzed how news in the 1990s on immigration issues and ethnic affairs in Great Britain show consistent ideological alignment with the "dominant white power elites" while maintaining "popular resentment among the white population at large" of immigrants and further immigration.

What also must be examined is the potential for pre-conceived expectations an audience brings to bear prior to reading a discourse (van Dijk 1995: 13). This set of

expectations can come from previously reported news on a topic, or a general opinion toward a news program, and is informed by an audience's own preferred cultural and identity representation. Beyond specific content information, a reader or listener has expectations regarding the language use of a news article or broadcast. For my research on broadcast media in Xinjiang, pertinent issues include individuals' personal preference of news sources (regional/national/international, as well as source language), education background, and age.

Convincing a reader or listener of a certain ideology is most effective when the nature of such ideology and control goes unnoticed by the audience (van Dijk 1995: 12). Discourses perceived as 'pure' by an audience may serve to legitimate the actions of the dominant, as well as disseminate viewpoints that serve to benefit the group in dominance, as is explained in Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991). In John Thompson's introduction to Bourdieu's work, he states:

"The efficacy of the performative utterance presupposes a set of social relations, an institution, by virtue of which a particular individual, who is *authorized* to speak and *recognized* as such by others, is able to speak in a way that others will regard as acceptable in the circumstances" (Bourdieu 1991: 8).

Bourdieu regards linguistic exchanges as essentially market or economic exchanges, wherein "power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized" (Bourdieu 1991: 37). Legitimization of a language, for example through the use of 'specialized' language in the mass media, is entirely entwined with the state, aimed at creating a "unified linguistic market" (Bourdieu 1991: 46). Those who are the 'dominated' in a particular linguistic or sociocultural situation are under inescapable pressure to "self-censor;" that is, to consider which codes or registers are the most

‘profitable’ and acceptable utterance, with regards to what Bourdieu refers to as *linguistic habitus* – expectations or anticipations of language in various uses (Bourdieu 1991: 77).

As explained in section 2.1, ‘purified’ Uyghur in the mass media comes at the recommendation of Xinjiang’s regional language and script committee, a decision that serves to essentialize Uyghur identity as well as their language. While this move toward ‘purity’ is lauded by Uyghurs with whom I spoke, it is also exclusionary in nature, serving as an *erasure* of common and accepted code-mixing with Mandarin in everyday spoken Uyghur. The alignment of a homogenous or ‘pure’ language with a particular ethnicity helps maintain China’s segmented and essentialized views of minorities in general. Irvine and Gal explained such desires for ‘subnationalism’ as a version of *fractal recursion*, in that “ideology of societal monolingualism and linguistic homogeneity renders functional varieties anomalous” (Irvine and Gal 2000: 66).

‘Purity,’ therefore, is a double-edged sword, a symbolic tool for attaining or exerting some form of power. In his article about Bourdieu’s theories entitled “Managing Tensions of Essentialism”, Robbie Duschinsky states that a discourse deemed ‘pure’ may be “peculiarly adapted to facilitate social consensus, and compelling a shared practical demand to protect or attain purity through the deployment of mechanisms of social exclusion...and social and self-regulation” (Duschinsky 2012: 1205). In other words, the mass media’s aim of social consensus and control may well be better achieved through the guise of Uyghur ‘purity.’

The role the media have in shaping and reinforcing power of the majority affects an individual both socially and cognitively (van Dijk 2006: 359). Cognitively, manipulative discursive strategies that may exist result in ‘biased’ mental models and



conceptualizations of an event (van Dijk 2006: 361). Mental models of an event are influenced by dominant ideologies, and are thus ‘biased’ because they reify anticipated representations of a social group. This concept is important to my research because of potential negative impressions my consultants have of broadcast news, regardless of the language in which it’s delivered. Additionally, the ‘manipulator’ (i.e. the government-controlled message) represents minorities in ways that benefits the dominant opinion or group.

In Xinjiang, ideas of what it means to be a minority in China are reinforced through mass media broadcasts. Alternative narratives on Uyghur and minority identity simply do not receive airtime. Financial assistance from the government and the modernization of minorities’ living conditions are common topics on Xinjiang Television (XJTV) channels, both in Chinese-language and Uyghur-language broadcasts. In the case of the Uyghurs, dance and music performances are also frequently broadcast, as Uyghurs are known throughout China as talented musicians and dancers as well as artisans. The positive role the police play in society is also frequently highlighted, especially during or following times of social disturbances in the region. These topics all play into China’s discourse and ideologies on minority identities.

## **2.5 MASS MEDIA IN CHINA**

The process by which a media text is produced is a critical component of understanding why and how certain national ideologies and narratives are both preferred and maintained. In China, the ideologies in mass media broadcasts are in part set forth and maintained by the Communist Party. Mass media serve as a pedagogical tool, as a window to the world as well as the rest of China. For this reason, journalists and officials

alike justify the country's common journalistic practice of reporting without presenting multiple viewpoints. Those with little to no formal education in rural areas of China would not be able to follow news reports that contained contradictions or that does not present the issues as straightforward as possible (Latham 2000: 637).

In his research on mass media in Guangzhou province, Kevin Latham notes that in Chinese mass media theoretical literature, "no concern is voiced for how the historically and socially situated conditions of news reception, including people's experiences of 50 years of mass propaganda campaigns, may affect the believability of Chinese news media" (Latham 2000: 642). Of those Latham surveyed and interviewed in Guangzhou in the early 2000s, most believed what the Chinese news media had to say. However, they also said they believed the report omitted viewpoints not in line with what the Communist Party intended to put forth in the media. Journalists, too, expressed to Latham that their sense of media professionalism conflicts with the Party line. A representative from each news station is to report to a government official on a regular basis, to confer that story choice and representation adhered to Party ideology. Journalists themselves conceded that television viewers get bored of such predictable, packaged news.

Though there were comparatively relaxed guidelines for mass media in the 1980s in China, the spring of 1989 changed everything. Before 1989, television had begun showing unedited National Congress meetings, including interviews by foreign journalists of Party leaders, which reflected the opening up of Chinese society (Li 1991: 352). Following the news coverage of the student protests and violent riots that took place on June 4, 1989 at Beijing's Tiananmen Square, restrictions tightened on all forms of mass media. Particularly, the government re-emphasized the following as tenants for

news production: 1) it is an integral component of the ideological sphere, 2) it must identify politically only with the Party, and 3) conducting positive publicity must be a priority.

Since the inception of the People's Republic of China, negative news has received little airtime. Only ten to twenty percent of all domestic news is considered 'negative' (Li 1991: 352). Two types of negative news that is permitted to air are about criminals and offenders (so as to discourage people from committing crime), and stories on current social problems (in order to seek solutions). However, problems with no simple solution in sight should not be featured (Li 1991: 354). Instead, news features should focus on recent political and economic successes. Additionally, in contrast with Western media, a Chinese news program's 'mood' remains consistent during the entire 30-minute broadcast. If there is a particularly grave lead story that day, the rest of the program will remain serious (Li 1991). This 'mood maintenance' is similar to what I observed on broadcast news in Xinjiang. For example, a news story about the government providing new housing for Uyghurs previously living in "unsafe" non-modernized dwellings will be directly followed by a report on improved building codes for earthquake safety.

To illustrate the dichotomies of Western versus Chinese media and their roles in their respective societies, Lily Chen (2004) used cross-cultural linguistic analysis of texts from the *China Daily* and *The Times*, based in the UK. Both are English-language publications in their respective countries. Chen employed CDA techniques along with William Labov's "evaluation" – seeking to study the "degree of neutrality or bias which are inscribed in the choice of words" by the reporters (Chen 2004: 676).

Chen analyzed fifty articles from each newspaper and tallied instances of grammatical structures, specifically three types of comparators (termed *evaluators* by Labov): negative, modal, and future. Comparators add detailed richness by “placing events against a backdrop of events that...may happen but may not have happened yet” (Chen 2004: 677). An example of a negative evaluator would be saying someone “has no plans” to do something (Chen 2004: 678). Future evaluators are found when reporting future events. For example, so-and-so “will do” or “will make” something. Modal evaluators speculate potential future outcomes. For example, something “could happen” or “could make a difference if...” (Chen 2004: 678).

Chen found a high frequency of negative evaluators in *UK Times* text, whereas the use of negative evaluators in *China Daily* texts were infrequent, and were mostly depersonalized in nature (i.e. an individual was not identified negatively). However, future comparators in Chinese news texts were high, in instances of expressing hopes or positive reports on planned progress and government successes (Chen 2004: 680). In contrast, *The Times* texts, when reporting on future plans or intentions, did not take such words at face value and infused a sense of skepticism. The frequency of modal evaluators differed between the two publications, as well. *China Daily* reports used “must, can, and should” – emphasizing the prescriptive role of the media when reporting on government affairs. The *UK Times* texts, instead, were full of “could” “would” “may” and “might,” highlighting the contrasting relationships between media and the government (Chen 2004: 682).

What was not covered in most of the literature I found on China was the issue of minority representation in Chinese media, especially within broadcasts conducted in a

minority group's mother tongue. This dearth of research makes it both challenging and enlightening to deal with the topic I have explored.

## **SUMMARY**

In this section, I have reviewed research on the following topics: regional language planning and education reforms in Xinjiang that have affected and continue to affect Uyghurs; Critical Discourse Analysis and the discourse-historical approach; language ideology, especially related to minority speakers' impressions of so-called 'pure' language in the public sphere; and mass media conditions specific to China.

The education reforms of the 2000s, having reduced mother-tongue language contact in the classroom significantly, have lead to increased dissatisfaction among Uyghurs toward the Han Chinese and the government in general. Contemporary research on Xinjiang points to identity formation among Uyghurs as being in opposition of the majority Han as opposed to in definition of themselves. Such conditions affect language attitudes and have strengthened ideologies Uyghurs have of their own language, including language of the mass media.

In Chapter 3, I outline my methodology, which is three-tiered: ethnographic research, interviews yielding metalinguistic commentary and language prescriptivism, and Critical Discourse Analysis of two broadcast media clips.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main question I wish to answer is how so-called ‘pure’ Uyghur language in the public sphere (in this case, broadcast news) is interpreted and viewed by Uyghurs living in Ürümchi, especially in light of bilingual education reforms of the 2000s.

I chose Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as my main method, and restricted my study to Uyghurs who had gone to Uyghur-language schools (*Mín kǎo mín*) as research participants. CDA is the most appropriate approach for these topics because of its multidisciplinary approach. Specifically, Wodak and Meyer’s discourse-historical approach (2001) embraces the interconnectivity needed for my thesis. I also incorporate Irvine and Gal’s methods for analyzing ideological implications of mass media language, including *fractal recursivity*, *iconization*, and *erasure*.

*Mín kǎo mín* were the most appropriate research participants because they are most likely to watch and consume Uyghur-language broadcast media, as *Mín kǎo Hàn* Uyghurs I spoke with typically preferred to watch Mandarin Chinese language channels. Additionally, these individuals represent a vanishing demographic, as Uyghurs are no longer educated in their own language. The educational reforms (see section 2.1) have resulted in changes to the school experience of *Mín kǎo mín*, who now receive only four hours a week of Uyghur-language instruction (specifically, in literature). The main language of instruction for all other subjects is now Mandarin Chinese; teaching materials are also in Mandarin. My consultants represent *Mín kǎo mín* who graduated prior to the region-wide changes to mother-tongue education, and provide insight on language attitudes among Uyghurs who received the most Uyghur instruction in the classroom.

Through interviews with adult Uyghurs in Ürümqi, I analyzed the effects of Uyghur language purification in two broadcast media clips aired on the regional Uyghur-language television station, Xinjiang Television 2 (XJTV2). Broadcast media are an ideal starting point for discussing and analyzing language attitudes and code-mixing among *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghur adults because of differences in language use in public (mass media) versus private (everyday conversation) spheres.

I analyze two clips from the region-wide XJTV2 station, both of which cover topics that affect Uyghurs throughout Xinjiang, including urban Ürümqi. The first discusses the destruction and rebuilding (referred to as “changing” in the clip) of historic homes in Qeshqer’s Old Town region, populated entirely by ethnic Uyghurs. The second clip, which also took place in the city of Qeshqer, pertains to region-wide ‘bilingual’ education reforms that have resulted in limited exposure to their mother tongue for Uyghur students, as well as discontent and concern among parents about their mother tongue’s path. I chose these two subjects because in present-day Ürümqi, those two topics were of most concern for my consultants and friends in general.

In addition, I collected examples in broadcasts of seldom-used Uyghur neologisms, including Turkic Uyghur words that are understood yet rarely used in everyday exchanges. I presented these, as well as Mandarin Chinese interjections from interviewees on news broadcasts, to my consultants. This provided me with feedback on language use without influence from their opinions on the topic or visual elements associated with the clip.

### 3.2 METHODS

To answer my research questions, I first and foremost engaged in ethnographic research, as my thesis is a qualitative study that relies heavily on participant observation. Ethnographic research is also necessarily in order to best understand the patterns and conditions in which code-mixing occurs. Researchers on code-mixing assert that long-term ethnography is the best way to understand and analyze local linguistic conditions (Jaffe 2007b: 43 Gardner-Chloros 2009: 14). My personal ethnographic observations in Ürümchi, described in Chapter 4, also allows for completion of the discourse-historical approach's *triangulatory* methodology, which examines discourse in the following ways:

1. The immediate text itself
2. The intertextual relationships between utterances, texts, genres and discourses, i.e. similarities that carry through different discourses
3. Extralinguistic components, i.e. broader social variables of a specific situation
4. The broader sociopolitical and historical context (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 41)

Beyond ethnographic research, I conducted interviews with nine *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs living in Ürümchi. I waited until the final three to four months of my stay in Ürümchi to begin interviewing one-on-one for several reasons: to build closer relationships, to understand the ways in which researchers are viewed in Xinjiang, and to ensure my own language capabilities. Conducting interviews in Uyghur, as opposed to English and depending on a translator, allowed for fuller, richer responses to develop and be evaluated. Recording devices were not used during interviews, due to the sensitive nature of conducting research in Xinjiang. I collected biographical information, but use



initials and pseudonyms throughout this thesis. Pertinent biographical information includes age, hometown, and education background. I asked respondents the following list of questions in Uyghur. The questionnaire is given in Latin-script Uyghur and English below.

Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Education background \_\_\_\_\_  
Hometown \_\_\_\_\_  
Sex \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you watch TV?  
Siz télevizor köramsiz?

2. What do you watch usually?  
Adette nimini körisiz?

3. What kind of channels do you watch?  
Qaysi kaysi qanallar körisiz?

4. What topics are you most interested in while watching television?  
Télevizor körgende qandaq mezmunlarga eng qiziqsiz?

5. Where do you usually get your news? TV? Radio? Newspaper? Cell phone, etc..?  
Adette, siz qayardin yengi hewer anglaysiz yaki oqoysiz: télevizordin, radiodin, gézitdin, yanfondin, qatarliqlardin...?

6. Which (of the above) do you prefer, and why?  
Qaysini eng yahshi körisiz? Némishqa?

7. Do you watch mostly Chinese stations or Uyghur ones? (for television and radio)  
Adette siz Uyghur tili qanallarni köramsiz yaki Henzu tili kanallarni köramsiz? radio uqun chu?

8. What do you think when you hear a mix of Uyghur and Chinese on TV? (Announcers or interview subjects may use some Mandarin words in Uyghur broadcasts.)  
Téleviziyede Uyghur tili bilen Henzu tilni arilash ishletse qandaq oylaysiz?

Following each interview, I gave my consultants the option of watching the two broadcast news clips. Most obliged, but were also fairly reticent with their feedback and observations. Conversations and responses elicited are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Although I used my script as a basis to focus my interviews, I maintained an informal, laid-back presence to allow my consultants to feel comfortable with me, and to allow for spontaneity in our conversations.

My consultants represent an opportunistic snowball sampling of acquaintances I met during my time in Ürümchi. I lived and attended classes in southern Ürümchi, which is where the majority of Uyghurs live in the city. Because I was intent on speaking and practicing Uyghur, as opposed to Mandarin Chinese, my social circle more naturally tended toward those educated as *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs, who found foreigners learning their language exciting and special. Although the majority of my friends and acquaintances had been educated in their mother tongue, they nonetheless employed code-mixing of Mandarin Chinese and Uyghur. Such tendencies, however, were deplored if they occurred in a mass media context, in the public sphere, as my analysis of my interviews demonstrates in Chapter 4.

Beyond using my consultants' responses to analyze the two broadcast media clips, I followed Wodak and Reisigl's discourse-historical approach (DHA) of Critical Discourse Analysis, because it allows for a broadest spectrum with which to analyze a text or discourse. I answer five questions key to DHA when analyzing my broadcast news clips:

1. *How are the persons named or referred to linguistically?*
2. *What traits or qualities are attributed to them?*

3. *By means of what arguments or argumentation schemes do specific persons use to legitimize actions?*
4. *From what perspective are these labels, attributes, and arguments expressed?*
5. *Are such arguments articulated overtly?*

In answering question 3, I followed Wodak's prescribed list of topoi, or "content-related warrants that...connect arguments with conclusions" (Wodak 2001: 74). This is particularly useful when examining texts for oppositional discourse and ideological discursive strategies. I focused on five specific topoi that suited my subject matter as well as the overall role mass media play in China.

1.	Usefulness: "If an action would be useful, one should perform it."
2.	Justice: "If a group of persons are all equal, they should be treated in the same way."
3.	Danger and threat: "If there are specific threats, one should do something to combat them."
4.	Burdening: "if a person or country is burdened by specific problems, one should act to diminish it."
5.	Reality: "Because of reality, as it is, a specific action should be performed."

Broadcast television sources are ideal for this project because of the multiple layers of communication and potential for revealing analysis. The diversity in topics of the clips I chose allows for a variety of ways to interpret Uyghur representation in the media. Television consumption is high among Uyghur families. Whether in a village or an apartment building in the center of Ürümchi, a television is prominently positioned in the living-dining room – typically one combined room in a Uyghur household. Hosting guests requires constant entertainment. While the host is busy cooking (typically enough food for very nearly twice the number of people there) the television will be on. Uyghur-language entertainment and game shows, Korean soap operas, and foreign movies are universally popular. Typically, a singular in-depth news feature plays during film showings or other shows.

Throughout Xinjiang, Uyghur-language television and radio broadcasts are available in Uyghur on both regional as well as local channels. Well over half of Uyghur-language content is directly translated from Mandarin Chinese. In a typical 30-minute news program, for example, the opening stories report on government meetings and Party-related news occurring in Xinjiang as well as throughout China. Approximately five of the 30 minutes were devoted to original Uyghur-language content in a mid-day news broadcast on Xinjiang TV 2 (XJTV2) that aired on June 16, 2012. However, in other non-news Uyghur programs, such as ones on education or the arts, considerable more original Uyghur content is featured.

#### **SUMMARY**

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of my fieldwork and the reasons for my methodology. I described linguistic observations regarding code-switching and lexical borrowings, as well as the apparently standards for Uyghur in the mass media or public sphere. I've explained how I employ CDA in Chapter 4 to analyze the two chosen broadcast clips. In Chapter 4, I analyze interview responses and the broadcast clips, and also explain critical ethnographic observations that helped inform my thesis.

## CHAPTER IV:

### DESIRES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR *BIZNING ANA TILIMIZ* [OUR MOTHER TONGUE]:

#### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

##### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings and analysis of urban *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghur adults' language attitudes regarding the ever-increasing use of Mandarin Chinese lexical borrowings in everyday speech, as well as the idea of 'purity' of broadcast media language. In my research, I engaged with two forms of language ideologies and use: natural patterns of everyday use, and metalinguistic commentary from interviews concerning expectations of language use in the mass media. I argue that education reforms that decrease the exposure to Uyghur language in the classroom, and increased pressure in the work force to have proficient Mandarin, have intensified Uyghurs' language ideologies on mother tongue purism in specific spheres – specifically, in broadcast media.

This chapter aims to answer how the use of Mandarin-derived words in everyday use, and in what ways speakers in broadcast media are held to different standards. The mass media upholds standardized languages worldwide, both majority and minority language (Mackey 2003: 68). I wish to better understand the perceptions of Uyghur 'purity' in the public sphere, particularly in light of education reforms region-wide, which I reviewed in section 2.3. The post-2005 bilingual education system requires that even all-minority-student classrooms (*Mín kǎo mín* classrooms) speak Mandarin during lessons and use Mandarin Chinese textbooks, aside from four hours a week of mother tongue literature class.

In section 4.2, I discuss ethnographic data pertaining to code-mixing and language attitudes. In section 4.3, I provide English-language translations of the nine informal interviews, as well as individual analyses that compare responses with actual language use I observed outside of an interview setting. In section 4.4, I employ Wodak and Reisigl's discourse-historical approach to examine two Uyghur-language broadcast media clips. I discuss the overarching topics of the news clips (housing and education reforms) in a broader context throughout all sections this chapter, as Wodak and Reisigl's discourse-historical approach calls for. Finally, in section 4.5, I provide a conclusion of the chapter.

#### **4.2. ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS– LIVED SOCIOPOLITICAL AND LINGUISTIC CONDITIONS**

In this section, I provide narratives (and subsequent analysis) of revealing exchanges I had with friends and acquaintances that relate to the subjects of my broadcast media clips: housing and reforms to the education system. I present the narratives before analyzing my interviews and the two broadcast news clips in order to present broad sociocultural conditions as necessitated by the discourse-historical approach.

While metalinguistic commentary (language about language) during interviews with my nine consultants provided me with an understanding of ideological implications of *sap* 'pure' Uyghur in the public sphere, I relied on long-term participant observation and ethnographic research in order to understand language use in a natural, everyday setting. During my thirteen total months of living in Ürümqi, I observed that code-mixing occurred most frequently when Uyghurs discuss a topic or activity that they indexically linked with Han Chinese culture. Such topics include housing – specifically

concepts related to high-rise apartment dwellings -- education, technology, and transportation.

#### **4.2.1 HOUSING AND CODE-MIXING**

Boundaries and representations of what is and is not authentically Uyghur are often indicated by patterns of code-mixing and lexical borrowing. Uyghurs typically use Mandarin-derived lexical items when discussing housing or household items, as modern-day high-rise apartment complexes resemble nothing of Uyghurs' traditional idea of 'home.'

I begin with a particular conversation I had with G (M's mother) about changes Uyghurs have faced related to living conditions and housing. I had been in Ürümqi for less than a month, and G was in the process of furnishing her newly acquired apartment in a six-story building. We were enjoying a casual lunch of *polu* (Central Asian pilaf) at a small café in southern Ürümqi. On the wall hung a painting of a traditional rural Uyghur home, a compound of single-story mud dwellings that surround a vast courtyard. Scenes like this are common in paintings and artwork in Ürümqi shops and restaurants. For some reason, though, G stared at this particular painting for an unusually long time.

"That is what my childhood home looked like," G finally said to me mid-meal. "There were no *qewetliq öy* (multi-story apartment buildings) when I was growing up. We (family) all lived together. It looks simple, doesn't it? But we were happy," she said.

I often found that naïveté was the best way to approach somewhat sensitive topics, such as the present-day housing situation in Ürümqi. "Do neighborhoods (*meheleler* in Uyghur) like the one in the photo still exist in Ürümqi?" I asked.

“Yes, but not for much longer,” G replied quietly. “A lot is changing.” She quickly changed the subject.

What has changed is the Uyghur neighborhood, as well as the physical structure and sense of home. One of my friends, a 24-year-old college student, once told me of the following Uyghur expression: *yiraqtiki qerindishingdin yeqindiki qoshnang ewzel*. It translates to, “A close neighbor is more valuable than a faraway relative.” Indeed, the remaining Uyghur neighborhoods in the outskirts of Ürümchi that I visited exude a strong sense of community, as shared courtyards act as a place for women, the elderly, and children to gather, play games, or gossip about other neighbors’ affairs.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years more and more Uyghurs are moving into high-rise apartment buildings as old, predominately Uyghur, neighborhoods are being razed in the name of modernization and structural safety. G herself lives in a sprawling high-rise apartment complex that caters specifically to Uyghurs and Muslims, complete with *halal* convenient stores within the gated complex.

I learned of the commonly used Mandarin lexical items for household items and household furnishings through G, during the period she spent furnishing her newly apartment. Many terms have been long entrenched in Uyghur vocabulary, such as *joza* ‘table’ from the Mandarin *zhuōzi* 桌子, and *bingshang* ‘fridge’ from the Mandarin *bīngxiāng* 冰箱, are terms commonly found in a Uyghur dictionary. I also heard seldom-used verb borrowing mixing in this particular situation. G happened to be the first person (though not the last) I heard say *zhuang shou qilish*. *Zhuāngxiū* is a Mandarin verb

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<sup>2</sup> (For more on the importance of Uyghur homes to their culture, see Dautcher 2010).



meaning ‘to furnish or repair’; *qilish* is a Uyghur verb meaning ‘to do, to make.’ This code-mixed verb was used as a way of discussing furnishing or decorating an apartment.

An example of employing an array of Mandarin-derived terms for household items occurred during an interview with one of my consultants, whom I call N. N is a 29-year-old female who grew up in a rural area about an hour outside of Ürümqi. N received a phone call from her father, whom she had just finished explaining to me does not understand Mandarin, and for whom she must adjust her speech so as to not incorporate Mandarin words she uses typically among Uyghur friends and co-workers. I took notes on N’s side of the conversation I heard, specifically Mandarin-derived words she incorporated into her speech, as indicated below. N was looking for a new apartment to rent, and was discussing her options with her father.

Mandarin-derived words N used: *Bīngxiāng* ‘fridge’; *Nánshān qū* ‘South Mountain district’ of Ürümqi; *Nán jiāng* abbr. ‘Southern Xinjiang’ *píngfāng* ‘square meters’; *Zhuāngxiū qilghan* ‘decorate’ an apartment - the first word Mandarin, with the Uyghur verb *qilghan* meaning ‘to do’; *Yínháng* ‘bank’, but then said *banka* (Russian loanword for ‘bank’) later on in the conversation.

When I questioned her again after listening to her conversation with her father on the phone, she once again explained that her parents do not understand nor do they employ Mandarin-derived words. Her conversation, however, shows otherwise, as N incorporated the standard amount of Mandarin lexemes related to the topic of housing. Although I was not able to hear her father’s side of the conversation, he clearly understood his daughter, and only once did N have to find another word to accommodate

his so-called monolingualism (she initially used the Mandarin word *yínháng* for ‘bank’, which is not a standard loanword that has been long entrenched in Uyghur vocabulary).

N has very segmented, particularized language patterns, she feels, for her many different social spheres. As she is nearly fluent in three languages (Mandarin, Uyghur, and English), she explained that sometimes she doesn’t realize what language she has just spoken until she reflects on her words. However, the contradiction remains that N was not entirely accurate in her evaluation of her parents’ linguistic capabilities and her own language practices while talking with them, labeling her mom and dad as largely monolingual and rural, unaffected by *qalaymiqan* ‘messy’ language influences of the city. This is a reflection of N’s desires for *sap* ‘pure’ Uyghur to exist in some capacity outside of her urban enclave. Her code-mixing also reflects her association with modernized apartments as being indexed to Han culture, a far cry from the Uyghur village environment where she was raised.

Employing a host of Mandarin-derived vocabulary for household items, as well as related verb mixing, doesn’t seem like such a threat to Uyghur language or culture compared to other overarching issues at play in present-day Xinjiang. Indeed, G’s new apartment in a sprawling complex of high rises resembled nothing of her idea, however nostalgic, of home. Her (and others’) frequent code-mixing when discussing housing in part reveals an association of new high-rise apartment complexes with Han culture.

#### **4.2.2 EDUCATION AND CODE-MIXING**

Discussions on education and academia also revealed frequent code-mixing tendencies, as the following anecdotes elucidate.

On nice days, Ürümchi residents took advantage of sunshine and comparatively clean air, and went to one of the city parks. I often sought out a bench at either People's Park or Yan'an Park (just down the hill from my campus) to study or read the newspaper. On several occasions, young Uyghurs approached me and ask to take a seat next to me. Once questions about my reasons for being in Ürümchi were answered, they would profess their dissatisfaction with certain facets of the economy as it relates to Uyghurs. Despite a seemingly healthy economy and job market, they would say, Uyghurs would never be guaranteed a job without fluent Mandarin Chinese skills. It was not a fair situation for *Mín kǎo mín* their age, they said, because their schooling did not put as much emphasis on written Mandarin.

“We have to put so much effort into improving our language skills, that it delays our learning job-related skills,” one young male college student in his 20s once told me. “You look around at all the nice, foreign cars here in Ürümchi, and none of them have Uyghur drivers.” Statements such as these reflected the desire for upward mobility that often conflicted with their desires to retain a level of fluency and respect of their mother tongue.

When I asked the young man what he was studying, he used the Mandarin name for the Xinjiang University of Finance and Economics (Mandarin code-mixing is in bold): “*Men **caijing daxue**-da oquwatimen*” (I am studying at the Economics University). I asked him to translate his university's name into Uyghur, because my Mandarin was poor. After he thought for several moments, he turned to describing the subjects and topics he was studying in Uyghur so that I would understand. “All our classes are in Chinese, anyway, so I barely know Uyghur words for my major,” he explained.

In another similar example, I asked one of my interview consultants, 26-year-old Ürümqi native B, to describe her education background to me. Her own educational experience was nearly identical to post-2005 idea of a *Mín kǎo mín*, which has been reclassified as “bilingual student” (*qosh tilliq* in Uyghur, or *Shuāngyǔ*, 双语, in Mandarin). She employed code-mixing within a phrase, saying, “*Men shuang yu sinipta oqughan*” ‘I studied in a bilingual classroom.’ *Sinip* is the Uyghur word for ‘classroom.’

During subsequent conversations, my consultant explained to me that most Uyghurs do not feel the need to use Uyghur words for academic subjects or education-based words because the majority of Uyghurs do not know those words. I met 20-year-old F, a native of the southern Xinjiang city of Qeshqer, during an English Corner gathering at a Western restaurant. F moved to Ürümqi to go to school about two years ago. He studied in his native Qeshqer as a *Mín kǎo mín* student in high school, and recently finished up his requisite yearlong Mandarin immersion courses that all Uyghur students regardless of educational background (be it *Mín kǎo Han* or *Mín kǎo mín*) must complete before taking college courses related to their majors. When I asked what his major was, he used the Mandarin word *Kuàijì* 会计 ‘accounting.’ He was surprised when I knew the Uyghur word (*bolghaltir*) for his major, which he himself did not know. “All the classes are in Chinese,” he explained.

Recent shifts in the regional education system and changes to Uyghur housing are two processes or associations Uyghurs index as Chinese. Education reforms have resulted in a decrease in Uyghur-language contact, as well as an increase in Mandarin-only textbooks and instruction. Like the young man above, and like several of my consultants and friends, many current college students (and professors, even) in Ürümqi do not even

know the Uyghur name of their major or university they attend, nor do they feel it is an important thing to know.

#### **4.2.3 TRANSPORTATION AND CODE-MIXING**

Another topic I noted is transportation methods. In December 2011, a friend offered to take me to the train station for my trip to Beijing. She could hardly believe that I would willingly subject myself to 33 hours on a train. “You are a foreigner! Why don’t you take a plane?” implying that foreigners are surely rich enough to afford a plane ticket, typically around three times the price of a train journey.

My friend was fairly well off financially and could afford to fly. However, even my Uyghurs friends who could not afford to fly had generally negative impressions of trains. Within Xinjiang, I observed an overwhelming preference among Uyghurs for buses, which I myself found frightening and uncomfortable compared to trains. I also observed that Han Chinese, when traveling within Xinjiang, used trains far more frequently than buses.

Sometimes, Uyghurs expressed discomfort at the idea of being in a train so close to so many Han Chinese. “They never stop eating on the train,” one of my Uyghur teachers warned me. “And what they eat is *paskina* ‘filthy’,” she continued, referring to the food not being *halal*. Discussing train experiences highlighted Uyghurs’ needs for spatial boundaries that could not be respected on a long-distance locomotive.

On the way to drop me off at the train station, my friend used the Mandarin word *huǒchēzhàn* 火车站 for ‘train station.’ I asked G about her use of Mandarin in this instance, if only to strike up conversation. “It’s just laziness,” she explained.

G's association of train stations, and trains in general, as inherently Chinese (or Han) influenced her word choice in that she would rather distance herself (and Uyghurs) from such practices. I was often told that something "not being native to Uyghur culture" was the reason for using Mandarin for many food items or produce, too.

Nonetheless, I had the pleasure of traveling by train with my Uyghur friend and tutor, S. I was planning to spend four weeks in Beijing following my final semester in Ürümqi, and she decided she wanted to come with me. S had never left Xinjiang; she had only twice been outside of Ürümqi. S was far too reticent to tell her family and friends where she was really going – Inner China, among the Han, to Beijing, a city she described prior to arriving as seeming like an immoral, soulless, Han-dominated city. Instead of expressing her desire to see another part of the country and perhaps find a summer job, she said she was "going away to learn English." Further details were not needed, she said. Her family would rather know less, and they know if they inquire too much it will only push her away and annoy her. S, although herself just a student with little in the way of an income, actually would have preferred to travel by plane; she'd never traveled anywhere by train or plane, but had overall negative impressions of trains. I was able to talk her into a train journey by describing how much I enjoyed my previous long-distance Chinese train trips, and stating how impressed I was the overall cleanliness. Lack of cleanliness is regarded as a standard stereotype of Han Chinese among Uyghurs. Though the issue relates largely to food consumption patterns, other very public habits, such as spitting phlegm on the streets, blowing one's nose in restaurants, and clipping finger nails in public spaces, create great discontent for Uyghurs.

My review of Chinese train service was satisfactory enough for S, so the decision was made. We purchased two hard-bed seats and prepared for the 45-hour trip. Our four other compartment mates were Han Chinese, and included a grandmother, her son, his wife, and their two children, one of which was young enough to sleep in the grandmother's bunk. In one of the few interactions we had with our passengers, S and I were in need of a knife, having just bought melon from a cart on the train platform at one of the final stops within Xinjiang. We hadn't planned appropriately with eating utensils, so S asked the younger woman in the bunk below us if they had a knife. Initially, they retrieved it, but the woman quickly informed us it wasn't *halal*. S remained polite, but her face couldn't hide all of her disgust. After that, S preferred to keep discussions with our compartment mates brief. In our car, we did find two other Uyghurs, with whom we were quick to share food (including cleanly cut melon) and talk about the trip, expectations, and family.

During the long journey, I began to notice slight shifts to S's speech patterns. In being surrounded by Mandarin Chinese speakers, and in desiring linguistic separation, she avoided typically used Mandarin words while speaking. On this Chinese train, S was both aware of and proactive in her *sap* 'pure' Uyghur speaking style. While S and I were eating our morning fruit after surviving our first of three nights on the train, S even used the rarely used word Russian loan *aplisin* for orange, instead of the overwhelmingly preferred *juze*, from the Mandarin *júzi*, 橘子. Indeed, many food items considered foreign to Uyghur culture employed both Russian and Mandarin loanwords. Either was considered correct and appropriate in personal conversations (which were considered part of the private sphere), but only the word indexed as non-Mandarin would be considered

correct in the public sphere, on broadcast media, in one of the only spaces to hear, as opposed to read, *sap* ‘pure’ Uyghur. Some Uyghurs I spoke with argued that any infusion of lexical borrowings in a news broadcast inherently made the discourse impure. Yet most were more concerned about the presence of Mandarin lexical items in broadcast discourse, as opposed to words borrowed from Russian or English.

#### SUMMARY OF SECTION 4.2

The ethnographic analysis I provided in this section demonstrates that code-mixing patterns are influenced by extralinguistic categories that are associated with Chinese culture. Modernized high-rise housing structures, education, train travel, and technology are just a few Han-influenced categories that assert themselves in everyday life for Uyghurs living in Ürümchi. What the following sections of this chapter analyzes is the ideological differences in language use in the private sphere versus the prescriptive standards of language in the public sphere (mass media). Cultural boundaries represented through language (code-mixing) disappear when in a mass media setting, as broadcast texts in minority languages often filter out influences of the dominant language (Jaffe 2007: 162).

I felt myself to be in a unique position as I approached my topic. Because I went into most social situations stating that my Mandarin was poor, friends and professors alike attempted to amend their speech to suit my linguistic competencies. This allowed for easily directed conversations about code-mixing, differences in Uyghur language in the public sphere, and effects of educational and population shifts seen in the last several years. Additionally, my actual listening abilities in Mandarin allowed me to pick up



easily on code-mixing in private conversations, as well as occasional use of Mandarin in television or radio broadcasts, which is detailed in section 4.4.

#### 4.3. INTERVIEWS: METALINGUISTIC COMMENTARY AND LANGUAGE PRESCRIPTIVISM

In this section I provide analysis of the nine interviews I conducted with *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs living in Ürümqi. I asked them directly about language use in broadcast media, yielding metalinguistic commentary and language ideologies. Metalanguage is defined as consisting of a body of shared opinions and attitudes regarding language use within a speech community (Johnson and Ensler 2007: 7). Language prescriptivism is defined as advocating for one type of speaking a language over another (or others), and implicitly identifies other varieties of speaking as ‘incorrect.’ Language prescriptivism often relates to the idea of linguistic purity, as is the case for Uyghurs and their desire for expunging language in the public sphere of Mandarin Chinese influence.

My consultants all modified their speech to incorporate comparatively fewer Mandarin lexical borrowings, an understandable switch while conversing directly about issues related to their mother tongue. Day-to-day interactions revealed more natural language patterns that aren’t always recognized by these bilingual or nearly trilingual speakers, much as N’s telephone conversation with her father indicated.

The interviews contained often-repeated laments such as “*Why would we not use our own language?*” when discussing infiltration of Mandarin in media broadcasts. One of my informants stated, “We need to speak a pure mother tongue to preserve our heritage.”

‘Purified’ speech is the most repeated linguistic aspiration among speakers of a minority language represented in mass media, as Jaffe (1999, 2007) found in among Corsicans in France, particularly a purification of the region’s dominant language. In Hoffman’s research on Berbers in Morocco, she also found that listeners and viewers sought ‘better versions’ of their language, as opposed to speech as ‘imperfect as their own’ (Hoffman 2008: 200).

My consultants’ responses also revealed that, while they value and appreciate ‘purified’ Uyghur, such positive valuation does not necessarily affect their impressions of the overall content of the news clips.

I have grouped their responses thematically, based on four concepts that emerged frequently throughout the interviews:

4.3.1. Identifying mother tongue ‘purity’

4.3.2. Language in practice

4.3.3. Mass media language as a pedagogical tool

4.3.4. ‘Sameness’ of broadcasts, regardless of language

Prior to discussing the above topics, I provide biographical information of each of my consultants, who are referred to in each subsection by random initials that do not reflect their actual names. For the confidentiality necessary to the current circumstances there, I did not make use of any recording devices, which made my consultants more at ease. These interviews were conducted in Uyghur, and I have translated them below into English. Following each of the four subsections, I discuss implications particular to each consultants’ responses as it relates to impressions of broadcast media and *sap* ‘pure’ versus *qalaymiqan* ‘messy’ Uyghur.

Following my analysis of interview questions, in section 4.3.5 I present three specific examples of *sap* ‘pure’ Uyghur and *qalaymiqan* ‘messy’ Uyghur I heard in television news clips, and my consultants’ responses to each.

#### CONSULTANTS’ BACKGROUNDS

1. A, in his mid 30s, was a *Mín kǎo mín* who grew up in Korla and moved to Ürümchi for college. He has remained there for work, and is proficient in Mandarin and has taught himself English.

2. N is in her late 20s and lives in Ürümchi. She grew up in a rural area just outside of Ürümchi, and attended college in Ürümchi city. She attended school as a *Mín kǎo mín*, and is fluent in Mandarin and near fluent in English, having immersed herself in English via foreign friends and popular television programs.

3. MM, in his early 30s, hails from Qeshqer, and has been in the tourism business for several years in Ürümchi. Along with Uyghur, he speaks Mandarin, some English, and some Russian. He is *Mín kǎo mín*, and has lived in Ürümchi since attending college.

4. AG is in her late 40s and was born and raised in Ürümchi as a *Mín kǎo mín*. She studied Uyghur literature in college and now lives with her husband and her two children in southern Ürümchi. Her husband is a *Mín kǎo Hàn*.

5. E is a 21-year-old female university student majoring in journalism. She is *Mín kǎo mín*, though her Mandarin is strong. She is also learning English at training centers on weekends, a popular choice among Ürümchi youths. She writes occasionally for the Ürümchi Evening Newspaper, but most of her schoolwork, she explained to me, revolves around translation issues from Mandarin to Uyghur.

6. H, a 20-year-old from Aqsu, has lived in Ürümchi for the last two years. He was a *Mín kǎo mín*. He is comfortable with written Mandarin, but does not often speak it.

7. F is a 20-year-old from Qeshqer who moved to Ürümchi to go to school about two years ago. He studied as a *Mín kǎo mín*, and recently finished up his requisite yearlong Mandarin immersion courses that all Uyghur students regardless of educational background (be it *Mín kǎo Hàn* or *Mín kǎo mín*) must complete before taking courses related to their majors. He plans to study accounting. When I asked what his major was, he used the Mandarin word *kuàijì* 会计 'accounting.' He was surprised when I knew the Uyghur word (*bolghaltir*) for his major, which he himself did not know. "All the classes are in Chinese," he explained.

8. B is a 26-year-old bilingually educated student. While her classmates were all Uyghur, most of the courses (aside from Uyghur literature and English) were delivered in Mandarin Chinese. Her own educational experience was nearly identical to post-2005 idea of a *Mín kǎo mín*, which has been reclassified as "bilingual student" (*qosh tilliq* in Uyghur, or *shuang yu*, 双语, in Mandarin). She actually used code-mixing to describe her education background, saying "*shuang yu sinip*," *sinip* being the Uyghur word for 'classroom.' B grew up in Ürümchi.

9. AW, in his late 40s, grew up in a village outside of Turpan. He teaches film classes to college students in Ürümchi, where he has lived for over twenty years.

#### **4.3.1 IDENTIFYING MOTHER TONGUE 'PURITY'**

In this section I analyze responses on viewers' expectations of language in the public sphere. As is frequently heard on radio programs, Uyghur listeners may call in and correct an announcer's or interviewee's language use if they have incorporated one or many Mandarin Chinese loanwords. For example, during a November 2, 2011, radio program on the region-wide station 1071 AM, a Uyghur man called in to voice his discontent on a previous caller's use of Mandarin Chinese when giving his business's

address and phone number, something commonly done in colloquial speech. “*Uzimizning ana tilimiz ishletishi kerek*” – “We need to use our own mother tongue.” Many of my consultants agreed with this sentiment; some have even called or written into television or radio stations themselves to convey similar opinions when they hear a Mandarin loanword on air. Below are their responses related to prescribed language rules in the broadcast media.

**Question 1: How do you view people on radio and television, either announcers or interviewees, who incorporate Mandarin words into their speech?**

*A: I feel regret. I don't think we should do that. I mean, why not use our own language?*

*AG: The journalist definitely needs to be corrected. I sometimes tell my students about examples I hear, as ways to teach them the correct Uyghur language. Sometimes, academics will write about it in the journal Til we Terjime [Language and Translation], to explain ways to improve our language. Myself included. I will use mistakes I hear as topics for journal articles. It is important to think about and talk about.*

*H: I complain to others. It annoys me because our language should be our language.*

*B: It is annoying when I hear henzuche sözler ‘Chinese words’ in Uyghur broadcasts. It bothers me...Eventually we will forget how to say some words if the media does not remind us.*

*AW: Oh, certainly they need to be corrected, by their editor or by a person calling in to voice concern. There are other options, other ways of speaking than using so*

*much Chinese in our speech. Television is a powerful and important tool and plays a role in society and culture, including language. But I really hardly ever hear Mandarin in television. I heard it in the past, though.*

**Question 2: What do you think when you hear seldom-used Uyghur words in the news, particularly for words that you may typically use a Mandarin loanword in everyday speech? For example, the word *gumbemedek* ‘mushroom’ sometimes replaces the Mandarin word *mógu* for ‘mushroom’ in newspaper articles and television news stories.**

*AG: I simply feel love toward my mother tongue.*

*F: I am happy when I hear things like that. I think it’s a thing of pride to use Uyghur instead of words that are from Chinese.*

*N: I think when making language choices for the media, you have to consider everyone who will watch. Villagers, for example. We (Uyghurs) grew up speaking a different language than we speak today, in some cases. We were used to using more Arabic and Persian words in Uyghur. That’s better than new language influences, in my opinion. We’d been using Arabic and Persian words for a very long time, and we are deeply connected to those cultures.*

**Question 3: How about if you hear a loanword from Russian or English, for example?**

*MM: Russian is more like our language, so it doesn’t bother me as much.*

*E: Sometimes the media will introduce new terms that are from English. For example, I read an article about the word ‘estudent’ from the English ‘student.’ The piece explained how it should be used only for college-level oqughuchi [Uyghur ‘student’].*

*A: With science and technology [pen-tehnika] words, they tend to use words from English more now, like telfon, kompyutir. There are also a lot of words from Russian, and not so many Chinese words.*

The above responses helped frame certain expectations Uyghur viewers have when watching television or listening to the radio. Mandarin Chinese, be it in the form of long-used loanwords or code-mixing interjections, is unacceptable in the public sphere. Loanwords from other languages, however, are viewed in a different light. Regarding the use of seldom-heard Uyghur words replacing common Mandarin words, such as the ‘mushroom’ example above, my consultants expressed pride in their mother tongue, despite all but two of them out of nine understanding the word when I first presented it to them. In a quick informal survey of 20 Uyghur adults, only three understood the word *gumbemedek* without any context clues, such as accompanying visual cues or texts.

In the following section, I present responses regarding the potential to adopt terms such as *gumbemedek* into everyday spoken Uyghur, and the dominance of Mandarin.

#### **4.3.2 LANGUAGE PRACTICE AND THE DOMINANCE OF MANDARIN**

This section includes responses pertaining to actual language practice in the private sphere, particularly on the use of Mandarin loanwords and code-mixing, as well as the effect – if any -- mass media ‘purity’ has on their own everyday speech. My consultants also discussed how their own speech shifts according to their audience.

**Question 1: Do you often incorporate Mandarin into your everyday speech?**

*N: It changes. It depends who I am with. I have a group of Mǐn kǎo Hàn friends I've mostly met here in Ürümchi. I have a group of friends from my childhood who are Mǐn kǎo mǐn. It depends on the age of people, too. For example, with my parents, I do not use very many Chinese words. If I am with Mǐn kǎo Hàn, I will use more Mandarin to help them understand me better. I adjust to the social situation.*

*MM: For my friends, who are mostly Mǐn kǎo mǐn, I will speak Uyghur, or if they know English, we can sometimes speak some English for practice. For most of us (Mǐn kǎo mǐn), English is easier for us than Chinese. The pronunciation is closer to Uyghur for example. If I'm with Mǐn kǎo Hàn, of course it's different. I'll speak a combination of Uyghur and Chinese.*

*AG: Yes, my husband hates it. He always corrects me if he knows the Uyghur word, even though he was educated in Chinese. For the purity of our language, I should pay attention. It is interesting because he is a Mǐn kǎo Hàn, yet he does care. Sometimes I am lazy about the language I use. I wish to be better about that. I know it is a bad habit. Sometimes I cannot remember words, though. For my work, I have to interact in Chinese very much.*

*H: Sometimes when I talk it's not standardized Uyghur. We use the easiest words or the words that come to us quickest. On TV they use more difficult, special words, and speak with more intention, because it's prepared.*



**Question 2: Would you ever try to use a Uyghur word you heard recently in the news that is very rarely used in everyday conversations?**

*MM: If I hear it on TV, sometimes I will listen and slowly, slowly become accustomed to it. If there's a way, sometimes, just like a teacher, I'll incorporate it, and use it in speech.*

*F: No, I wouldn't use it with students my age. It would sound funny. They may not like it or understand me. It just doesn't make sense to use in conversation.*

*H: No, probably, not, because as I said, when speaking we just use what comes to mind first.*

*N: It (the media) is not powerful enough to make our language more pure. Especially with everywhere (in school) teaching Chinese now.*

In the above responses, my consultants explained that while their spoken language may change according to audience, it would generally be unnecessary to incorporate words introduced to replace common Mandarin terms through the mass media into everyday speech. MM did express his desire to 'slowly, slowly' incorporate such words into his speech, but in subsequent conversations noted that it might come across as condescending if his friends or others he was speaking with did not understand.

#### **4.3.4 Mass media -- a pedagogical tool for language learning**

Several of my consultants compared a news announcer to a teacher, or stated that the mass media plays an important role in language pedagogy. Whereas the Chinese government considers the mass media as a learning tool to shape audiences' world views

(see section 2.5), my consultants tended to focus specifically on the language-learning potential of Uyghur-language broadcasts.

**Question: What kind of role does broadcast news media play in language?**

*E. The media need to pay attention to keep the purity of the language. It can maintain the richness and resources of a language. A lot of times, articles in the newspaper will introduce new words to readers, to explain the correct ways in which they are used. So in this way, television media and other news media act as a ‘pedagogika’ pedagogical tool.*

*MM: Television is like a teacher for the public. Teachers should not make mistakes, and the same goes for television announcers. So I think it is important.*

*B: I think it is important for media to use true Uyghur words, because otherwise our language will change or be forgotten. For myself, many words I cannot remember except for the henzuche ‘Chinese.’*

*AG: We need to work to ‘purify’ our speech to preserve our culture and heritage.*

For an audience of *Mín kǎo mín* Uyghurs, television announcers were seen as filling a void in light of bilingual education reforms. As access to pedagogical materials for Uyghur has become more limited, they place importance on using ‘pure’ Uyghur in the mass media to serve as brief reminders of forgotten words.

**4.3.4. ‘Sameness’ of broadcasts, regardless of language**

My consultants responded to differences and similarities between Mandarin Chinese broadcast television and Uyghur broadcast television, particularly news

programs. While the majority of my consultants said that they prefer to watch Uyghur-language channels, they also explained that due to the overwhelming amount of repackaged translated pieces, it matters very little in which language the news is delivered.

**Question: Do you feel there are any differences between Uyghur and Chinese news sources?**

*MM: For me it's the same, translated or not. Chinese programs do have more news pieces each day, I think, because there are more media people and workers (on the staff).*

*N: Pretty much I think they're the same. In different languages, it's just same news and message.*

*A: Well, I watch both CCTV (Mandarin) and XJTV2 (Xinjiang Television 2, shown throughout the region in Uyghur). For World News programs I watch in Chinese. For Xinjiang news I watch programs in Uyghur usually. The overall message and meaning is the same, so it makes little difference.*

*AW: I feel that it is mostly the same; sometimes we have more information on culture with dance and singing programs on Uyghur channels. But there are just so few original Uyghur programs; before we had a richness of original material such as shows and movies. Now it's recycled from Chinese.*

*E: Well, on the Internet, there will be a lot of notes and comments about the events or news. It's quick to access and find out, compared to television, which may only come on at certain hours -- especially Uyghur channels. On Tuesday afternoons, for example, there are no Uyghur TV stations because they do repairs*

*on that day.*

The above interview responses reveal a very real issue regarding multilingual broadcast and translation: direct translation of broadcasts into multiple languages around the world does not and cannot reflect a local culture or imbue special meaning. The very idea that languages are parallel, and can be translated and carry the same meaning across languages is misleading (Mackey 2003: 74). My consultants admitted here that despite some TV channels employing Uyghur, the majority of the content still seems Chinese to her. N recognized that broadcast news clips, regardless of topic, stem from the same ideological Party line, and generally represent Uyghurs in similar ways. N pointed out in subsequent conversations that Uyghurs are frequently portrayed as receiving help from government entities. Indeed, both of the news clips I analyze in section 4.4 contain the phrase *yardem berish* ‘giving help’ with regards to the government aiding minority communities.

#### 4.3.5 EXAMPLES OF ‘PURE’ AND ‘MESSY’ LEXICAL CHOICES

Below are three specific examples of lexical choices heard in news broadcasts. I did not show my informants the entire broadcast clip; rather I pointed them directly to the instance of either *sap* ‘pure’ or *qalaymiqan* ‘messy’ Uyghur. By analyzing such data and responses outside of content-based influence, I allowed my consultants to speak more about language expectations in the mass media without feeling reticent about potentially sensitive issues, such as Old Town transformations and education reforms. The first represents an easily recognized but seldom used Turkic Uyghur word. The second

example is a neologism rarely recognized or used in the private sphere. The final example is of ‘messy’ Uyghur.

In a June 22, 2012, television news clip about misconceptions urban Uyghur children have of food sources, an interviewee’s lexical choice for *sap* Uyghur was displayed. The interviewee, a Uyghur woman in her 40s, was describing the ignorance of urban children regarding where produce and food comes from, and the importance of parental education or trips to rural areas to better understand the processes. The interviewee initially used the Mandarin word *say* for vegetable (*cài* 菜 ‘vegetable dish’) but corrected herself and said “*köktat*,” a Turkic Uyghur word for vegetable.

I showed several of my consultants this clip, and responses generally followed what *sap* ‘pure’ Uyghur in the public sphere would be expected. Interviewee MM said that it would have been absolutely incorrect if she hadn’t corrected her Mandarin term with a Uyghur one. N was impressed with the interviewee’s awareness and quickness to use a more ‘pure’ word. Despite prevalence of the Mandarin word *say* ‘vegetable’ in everything from Uyghur movies to Uyghur restaurant menus, the woman in this example (along with my consultants) recognized its etymology and therefore ideological connection when in the public sphere. Although my consultants’ responses garnered a general sense of approval for this particular example of amended speech, none said it was practical or necessary to employ the Uyghur term exclusively in everyday speech – when ordering food, for example. S explained that the Uyghur term *köktat* was a very easily recognizable word to Uyghur speakers. It didn’t provide translation or comprehension issues when used in media broadcasts, unlike the following example.

A seldom-heard Uyghur term in the public sphere occurred in a November 22, 2011 broadcast clip on computer technology. The announcer used the word *barmaq diska* for “USB, flash drive,” instead of the only word I typically heard in casual conversations, *yo pen*, from the Mandarin *U-pan U-* 盘 'U[SB] disk.' Within the same broadcast clip, the announcer says '*USB eghizi*,' [USB aperture, lit. 'mouth'] referring to the portal in a computer for inserting a USB. My consultants considered both *USB eghizi* and *barmaq diska* to be appropriate and authentic word choices, and considered them more preferable than using the Mandarin term *yo pen*, even though it is the most common word choice in everyday speech. Similar to the substitution of the unusual non-Mandarin term *gumbemedek* to replace the common everyday Mandarin term *mógu* 'mushroom,' Uyghurs I spoke with, including several of my own Uyghur language teachers, did not know a term for “flash drive” other than *yo pen*. (Asking in a classroom setting provided me with a useful stance as a student and language-learner, instead of being considered a language researcher during my informal interviews.)

An example of *qalaymiqan* 'messy' Uyghur was found in a May 22, 2012 news clip on a hit-and-run crime, talking to witnesses and the police about finding the perpetrator. A male interviewee used the Mandarin word *hétóng* 合同 '[legal] contract' instead of the Perso-Uyghur words *tohtam* to refer to the apparent contract killing. I heard both words (*tohtam* and *hétóng*) used fairly equally during my ethnographic research. Though all interviewees understood *hétóng*, they deplored the interjection of Mandarin terms on television or radio, as they reiterated the importance of using their own language, citing reasons such as pride, basic linguistic correctness, or highlighting the important role that media language plays in educating the public.

Positive impressions of *sap* ‘pure’ language choices in broadcast media do not always extend to the actual content of the program, as will be discussed in the following section.

#### 4.4 BROADCAST MEDIA: IMPRESSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

##### INTRODUCTION

One of the most sensitive topics of conversation for Uyghurs is education. Recent changes drastically reducing the number of Uyghur language classroom hours have resulted in discontent among some Uyghur parents, who fear that their children would not attain a desired level of fluency in their own language.

My consultant AG was going through an especially difficult time leading up to the June 2011 *gāokǎo*, the pressure-packed, all-or-nothing university entrance exam. While Uyghurs frequently use the Mandarin term *gāokǎo*, I also heard *dàxué imtihani*, a code-mixed expression with *dàxué*, the Mandarin word for ‘university,’ and *imtihan*, the Arabic-Uyghur word for ‘exam.’

AG’s son, the second of two children, was a *Mín kǎo Hàn* at a prestigious high school in Ürümchi. Her older daughter studied as a *Mín kǎo mín*. Such education patterns are common among two-child Uyghur families. (Chinese minorities are generally allowed two children, and rural minority families are allowed three). Among the two-children families I got to know in Ürümchi, all opted to enroll either the youngest *or* the son (if they had one) in Mandarin-intensive *Mín kǎo Hàn* classrooms. AG, herself a Uyghur literature professor, struggled to accept changes she witnessed in her son’s language competencies, and became depressed when good test scores, and thus, opportunities to go to college outside of Xinjiang, were not materializing. She told me

she blamed cultural misunderstandings and vast differences in child rearing practices between Uyghurs and the Han for her son's poor results on the *gāokǎo* college. AG then used an example from a television clip to demonstrate what she meant.

“There was a news story on villagers receiving government assistance,” she explained. “On the video they showed villagers’ homes being refurnished and redecorated, to look cleaner and more modern, but still supposedly Uyghur. The media people were helping hang up a new carpet.” (Uyghur homes commonly have tapestries or carpets adorning the walls.)

“But they hung the carpet upside-down. The pattern was upside-down. As a Uyghur I knew that. But they (the media, non-Uyghurs) didn’t understand.” What they didn’t understand, according to AG, were basic cultural components, including common patterns on tapestries and carpets, which AG and other Uyghurs recognize easily. What AG intended to explain to me in this anecdote was that no amount of language training, education, or translating can bridge inherent cultural differences between the Han and Uyghurs.

AG’s example exemplifies tensions I uncovered regarding Uyghurs and broadcast media, though her initial discontent in the above example stemmed from education. Recent demographic changes, which seems to 45-year-old AG to have come at rapid speed, have affected culture, language patterns, education demands, and inter-cultural tensions.

By employing Critical Discourse Analysis of Uyghur-language broadcast media clips, and explaining responses my Uyghur consultants had regarding the two broadcast clips, I examined the role of *sap* Uyghur in relation to actual content and semiotics



(specifically – *iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure* – Irvine and Gal 2000). The broadcast media clips I chose represent topics discussed frequently in the public sphere, as well as privately in conversations. Meaningful discussions in section 4.2 in this chapter serve as background information to provide the reader with a clearer understanding of the topics featured in light of sociopolitical implications.

Before turning to the two specific clips, I want to reflect on the official role of a television or radio broadcaster, as it is represented in an official, public sector. Below is an excerpt from an article on Xinjiang Television (XJTV)’s website from August 1, 2009, entitled “The critical role and work of radio and television announcers.” In it, the writer, Aminem Abdurehim, praises television and radio announcers and the important role that they have in being a voice for the Communist Party. Related to language, he writes in Uyghur (my translation):

*“Through radio or television broadcasts, in every type of program and story, announcers’ pleasing and standardized language (and standard pronunciation) is passed on to its listeners... Their words orient public opinion, and they must, from start to finish, be honest and responsible in the utmost of ways....”*

(XJTV 2009: [http://www.xjtsnews.com/normal/content/bak/content/2009-08/01/content\\_224437.htm](http://www.xjtsnews.com/normal/content/bak/content/2009-08/01/content_224437.htm)).

The role of a broadcaster is two-fold: he or she must project competency in the standard language, and act as a voice for the government, the Party, and the military. While my consultants praised broadcasters for their *sap* ‘pure’ Uyghur language choices, such positive valuation seldom carried over to opinions of actual content. After informal

interviews, I asked my consultants to watch the two news clips, after which I asked their opinions of the news, the importance of it to them, and their overall impressions. I chose not to press for specifics, because watching the clips in my presence already made some of them uncomfortable. To those people, I did not ask follow-up questions.

I chose the two media clips below for several reasons. I wanted to cover key concerns in present-day Xinjiang from the perspective of the mass media. Second, both of them pertain directly to and feature Uyghurs. Third, both of the following clips are from XJTV2 station, which is broadcast throughout the region. Both clips are also situated in Qeshqer, considered the homeland of the contemporary idea of Uyghurs and Uyghur identity.

Below, I provide a screen capture of the video clip with a title in transliterated Uyghur, and English, followed by a summary of the Uyghur-language content of the video in English. Verbatim quotes I included in the translation are put in quotations. I follow the summaries with Critical Discourse Analysis, employing Wodak and Reisigl's discourse-historical approach by answering five questions to critically analyze strategies to maintain particular ideological perspectives (Wodak 2001: 72). The questions are as follows:

1. *How are the persons named or referred to linguistically?*
2. *What traits or qualities are attributed to them?*
3. *By means of what arguments or argumentation schemes do specific persons use to legitimize actions?*
4. *From what perspective are these labels, attributes, and arguments expressed?*
5. *Are such arguments articulated overtly?*

In addition, I follow Irvine and Gal's concepts of *iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure*, to approach language ideology and semiotics in order to analyze the visual components and macro-textual elements of my two broadcast news clips (see section 2.3).

**1. Original Uyghur clip, from May 21, 2012 on XJTV2. Clip duration: 1:50.**

**Title: Changes to Qeshqer Old Town respectful of locals' wishes**

**Uyghur Title: Qeshqer kona sheher rayonini üzgertishte el rayigha hürmet qilindi**



**Summary:** Housing structures in Qeshqer's Old Town are described in the clip as dangerous, especially in the face of earthquake threats. The region's long-term plans aim to respect locals' wishes, improve inhabitants' lives, and help those in poverty. With regards to changes to houses, the government provides three choices for families:

1. Inhabitants move out, the government takes charge and builds a home
2. The government puts a basic structure in place, and the inhabitants themselves decorate it.
3. Inhabitants build the home with financial assistance from the government

Whichever option is chosen, the size of the new structure will be identical to the inhabitants' old home. Obvious efforts are being carried out to maintain and pass down

Old Town's history and culture. Today's Qeshqer, with buildings national (characteristic) buildings, is full of handicrafts, coppersmiths, embroiderers, etc...

This year in Qeshqer Old Town, 15 thousand families' homes were planned to be changed, including in four key regions within Qeshqer Old town 8043 families' homes that will soon be changed and constructed. Before the October holiday (*National Day – the most popular time for traveling/sightseeing*) “for the first time, Qeshqer will be a modernized tourism destination.”

**2. Clip translated from Mandarin Chinese, aired June 18, 2012 on XJTV2. Clip duration: 3:08.**

**Title: A nearly 10 billion yuan investment boosts development of Xinjiang education**

**Uyghur title: 10 milyard yuenge yéqin yardem meblighi Shinjangning ma'arip tereqqiyatigha türtké boldi**



**Summary:** The 2011-2015 “universal plan for assisting Xinjiang allotted 9.6 billion yuan in investing in the education system.” The investment aims to improve the bilingual education system, including bettering the education environment, outlining rules, and increasing the speed of language acquisition (Mandarin) for bilingual students (who are Uyghurs). Teachers and leaders from Shenzhen City came first to Qeshqer's Old Town region's No. 18 elementary school, to provide training for teachers in Xinjiang.

Following the training, “the children's interest in learning Chinese greatly increased. Before, within one hour of lessons, they would learn 5 characters; now they can learn 10 characters in an hour.” With a 300-million dollar investment, a Qeshqer-Shenzhen kindergarten program has been established, in order to begin bilingual education earlier than before. Training programs such as the Qeshqer-Shenzhen

partnership occur throughout Xinjiang. In Aqsu, Xinjiang teachers get free instruction at a training center from educators from Zhejiang Province. Such investments and programs serve to improve the education system from elementary school through to high school, as well as technical school education.

#### 4.4.1 REFERENTS

***Question: How are the persons named or referred to linguistically?***

In clip 1, inhabitants of Qeshqer Old Town are referred to impersonally and collectively, without reference to their ethnicity: *ahale* 'inhabitant', *puqra* 'citizen', and *el* 'people.' Notably absent is the ethnonym *Uyghur*. This is a public *erasure* of the relationship of Uyghur ethnicity to the wholesale destruction of historic sections of cities (so-called *kona sheher* 'Old Towns') throughout Xinjiang. Qeshqer is considered by Uyghurs to be the most culturally iconic and important old town of all.

The second clip discusses bilingual students, *qosh tilliq oquguchilar*, and the specific students focused on in this clip are elementary school (*bashlanghugh mektep*) and kindergarten (*ma'arip baghchisi*) children. The announcers and interviewees used the word *balilar* 'children' the most often, with two references to *oquguchilar* 'students' (of any age). Similar to the previous clip, the ethnonym 'Uyghur' is not used, nor is *az sanliq milleti* 'minority.' Rather, the term for 'children' follows on three occasions '*qosh tilliq*' 'bilingual' to describe their education. As was also done in the Old Town housing clip, there is a public *erasure* of the relationship of minority (Uyghur) students to bilingual education, along with an *erasure* of the Uyghur language itself, which is not mentioned nor shown in the classroom footage. Additionally, during the clip the term *qosh tilliq* 'bilingual' is mentioned nine times; mention of *henzuche* 'Chinese language' occurs only once. There is no mention of the Uyghur language, as mentioned above.

#### 4.4.2 TRAITS

***Question: What traits or qualities are attributed to them?***

In clip 1, traits such as poverty, living in old, dangerous dwellings, and need for help are attributed to the inhabitants of Qeshqer Old Town. The clip also makes mention of the cultural importance of Old Town, bringing up activities and occupations associated with Uyghurs (or the inhabitants), which are: coppersmithing, embroidering, and making other handicrafts. These activities are all non-Han crafts, but rather represent Uyghurs as traditional and artisanal – stereotypes long upheld by the government for not only Uyghurs but all of China's ethnic minorities. Beyond the people featured in the video, homes in disarray (including one with a large crack in its wall) are shown.

The phrase 'Chinese language' occurs only once. There is no mention of the Uyghur language, as stated above.

In clip 2, the students and instructors are described as in need of higher quality teaching (from the non-Uyghur-speaking teachers who came from the distant southern Chinese city of Shenzhen) to improve their Mandarin Chinese levels. The students' interest in Mandarin is said to have increased once these so-called more effective (than Xinjiang-based) instructors excited them about learning. Semiotically, classroom clips show excited faces and synchronized recitation of Mandarin Chinese sentences and character definitions. Those who are actively instructing in this clip (as opposed to receiving training from other teachers or instructors) are Han Chinese, *iconizing* the Han as the leaders, and the Uyghurs as those in need of guidance.

#### 4.4.3 ARGUMENTATION SCHEMES

*Question: By means of what arguments or argumentation schemes do specific persons use to legitimize actions?*

Five topoi, “content-related warrants that...connect arguments with conclusions” (Wodak 2001: 74), are used to answer this question. They are used to analyze oppositional discourse and ideological discursive strategies, as topoi are commonly considered ‘collective symbols’ of cultural stereotypes (Wodak and Meyer 2001: 35). I focused on five specific topoi from the list Wodak provided, as they are relevant to the sociopolitical changes in Xinjiang and Han-Uyghur relations I observed, which reflect government efforts at modernizing minorities and improving their Mandarin language capabilities, even at the detriment to Uyghur culture.

**Table 4.1: Topoi used in this study (after Wodak 2001: 75)**

1.	Usefulness: “If an action would be useful, one should perform it.”
2.	Justice: “If a group of persons are all equal, they should be treated in the same way.”
3.	Danger and threat: “If there are specific threats, one should do something to combat them.”
4.	Burdening: “if a person or country is burdened by specific problems, one should act to diminish it.”
5.	Reality: “Because of reality, as it is, a specific action should be performed.

In the first news clip, the argument is being made for razing and rebuilding (described only as “changing” in the clip) Qeshqer’s Old Town in order to allow citizens to live modern lives and be safe in the face of earthquake dangers. The argument is that Old Town is too unstable and non-modernized to allow its citizens to prosper and be secure. The second news clip is aimed at legitimating the need for Mandarin teachers outside Xinjiang.

1. Under **Usefulness**, the first clip lists reasons for razing the Old Town such as improving living conditions, creating more “modernized and civilized” lifestyles,

providing support for the poor, and rebuilding Qeshqer so that it will be an "entirely modern" tourist destination. The implication of the clip was that not rebuilding the old dangerous homes in Qeshqer would further endanger living conditions, and Qeshqer would remain a backwards destination unattractive for tourists. occurs via the topos of Usefulness by being able to increase the exposure and rate of learning Mandarin Chinese at a younger age, and the overall educational experience for minority children is said to be vastly improved. Teachers from Inner China (Shenzhen and Zhejiang in this instance) provide training and improve education "quality" because of their competency in Mandarin. The implication is that local Mandarin speakers do not possess this quality.

2. Both clip also address the topos of **Danger or Threat**. It occurs in clip 1 by stating that rebuilding Qeshqer Old Town structures provides more stability in the face of earthquakes. The Old Town remains underdeveloped, and current conditions do now allow for “modernized and civilized” livelihoods for its inhabitants. With regards to clip 2, the potential threat in this case is poor education standards in Xinjiang and Qeshqer, thus investments and assistance from external collaborators is necessary.

3. The topos of **Justice** is also addressed in both clips. In clip 1, the Old Town inhabitants are said to be deserving of conditions to lead better lives and be protected from earthquakes with modern structures. Additionally, the topos of Justice relates to the notion of choice and maintaining traditional design and construction methods because the government now allows each family to have more of a say in what will happen to their former home. In clip 2 regarding the topos of Justice, students across China are



presented as having a right to equally high quality education in Mandarin, which will improve their future economic status.

4. The clips also address the topos of **Burdening**; Old Town structures are claimed to be holding back Qeshqer (and, implicitly) Xinjiang and China in general in clip 1. Regions that appear visibly impoverished shall be rebuilt and modernized. With regards to clip 2 and the topos of Burdening, a slower rate of language acquisition among bilingual students, which is a burden to those students along with society in general – as China’s nationalist language policy strives for all to be competent in *Putonghua* ‘Standard Chinese’ -- should and can be diminished by improved education methods and training local teachers.

5. Finally, the topos of **Reality** in clip 1 is that Old Town is not modern, and is therefore susceptible to natural disasters and is holding back its citizens from leading richer lives (literally and figuratively). According to the clip, the reality is that renovation can be done so as to preserve the historical and cultural importance of Old Town, by providing for residents’ choices and respecting locals’ wishes. By formulating the argument as one of safety and quality of life, the announcer justifies the conclusion of historic homes being destroyed and rebuilt. Clip 2 utilizes numbers-based evidence and percentages to express the goals of the Xinjiang Education Bureau to improve students’ Mandarin Chinese skills over time – beginning in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Sources in the clip who work with the Xinjiang Education Bureau claim that a more complete (and quickly acquired) knowledge of Mandarin Chinese is essential for

education improvements in all subjects at all levels, and in gaining skills for the job market.

#### 4.4.4. PERSPECTIVE

**Question:** *From what perspective are these labels, attributes, and arguments expressed?*

As is standard for broadcast news media in China (and in varying degrees in national mass media worldwide) the broadcaster's words act as the voice of the national government. Mass media play a role in shaping public opinion, as well as serving as an example of ideal language and speech. In clip 1, the announcer is a male Uyghur who expresses views created and vetted by the Chinese Communist Party. The clip features no external interviewees or viewpoints.

In clip 2, six individuals are interviewed, five of which come from the perspective of either teachers or leaders from the regional education bureau. The other interviewee is a young Uyghur student, who expresses how much more she enjoys learning Chinese and looking at books that a teacher from Shenzhen supplied. One of the clip's interviewees, a Uyghur teacher who came to Aqsu to undergo free training from educators from Zhejiang Province explains that the living environment where he and other Uyghur teachers stay during the courses are great, and that progress is being made. A third Uyghur interviewee, titled a supervisory leader from the Xinjiang Education Bureau, discusses that increasing the rate at which young students learn Mandarin Chinese will allow them to achieve greater success throughout school, including at vocational and training schools, which will improve job skills. One of the Chinese language teachers (ethnically Han) explains improvement she's seen in the classroom, as well as students' increased

curiosity and excitement for learning Mandarin. Such statements imply a previous incompetency of educators based in Xinjiang, as well as expertise of the Han from Inner China.

Other Han leaders from the Xinjiang Education Bureau highlight, with numbers-based evidence, long-term projections of bilingual education improvement spanning from kindergarten to high school and beyond (including technical school education based in Qeshqer).

#### 4.4.5 OVERT AND COVERT STRATEGY

**Question:** *Are such arguments articulated overtly?*

In clip 1, the argument that Old Town is too unstable and non-modernized to allow its citizens to prosper and be secure is not articulated overtly and directly – but rather depend upon frequently occurring words when discussing Uyghur issues in mass media, such as ‘help,’ ‘improve,’ and ‘modernize.’ Discourses on modernization and globalization often emphasize such words. This nearly two-minute script uses the Uyghur word for modernize six times, improve five times, and help four times. Such discourse can be “used to rhetorically project a particular view of globalization that can justify or legitimize the actions, policies or strategies of particular social agencies and agents” (Fairclough 2009: 321). For China, a country that cares deeply (perhaps obsessively) about their projected image to the world, poverty and non-modernized areas and dwellings must be taken care of swiftly and generally without regard to humanitarian tact.

Semiotically, images of Old Town buildings with scaffolding and cranes iconize the place as unstable and in need of structure and order, provided by the Han and the government. However, such *iconization*, when from the perspective of a Uyghur viewer,

evokes disappointment and fear that their cultural heritage is being destroyed. The clip indexes these 'inhabitants' (implicitly non-Han Uyghurs) as "traditional" and in need of assistance. In contrast, the government and the Han are modernized, civilized, and able and willing to help minorities.

In clip 2, argument being made is that Xinjiang schools need assistance from Shenzhen-based educators and massive financial investments to improve their 'bilingual' levels as the clip states (implicitly – their Mandarin Chinese levels) because the former methods of language acquisition were not effective. These arguments are not articulated overtly, but rather are implied through statements from the teachers and representatives from the Xinjiang Education Bureau. They give examples through numbers-based evidence on improvements they've witnessed (i.e. "in the past, students could learn five [Chinese] characters in an hour; now, they can learn ten").

#### **4.4.6 TEXT IMMANENT CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Beyond the five critical questions above, the discourse-historical approach also prescribes three forms of critique. Wodak and Reisigl's *text immanent critique* aims at "discovering inconsistencies, (self-) contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the text-internal or discourse-internal structures" (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 32).

In the above clip, potential paradoxes between the text and actual plans lie in the expressed effort to modernize slowly '*asta asta*', yet the clip states a deadline of construction completion in four months' time: that by the October National Holiday, Qeshqer Old Town will be a "fully modernized tourist destination." Additional contradictions lie in the desire to maintain the cultural and historical importance of the Old Town, all the while aiming for inhabitants to be more "civilized" and "modern."

However, a stroll around parts of Qeshqer Old Town (as I did in June 2011) reveals that it's far emptier of inhabitants than the clips in the broadcast show, and it's more likely to come across other tourists than locals. Indeed, as the broadcast clip stated, its goal is to make Qeshqer a more modern tourist destination, which rarely allows for historical and cultural importance to remain intact.

Regarding clip 2, the very notion of bilingual education, as it is explained in the second clip, is a contradiction. No Uyghur-language posters or other material is shown in the clip, while schoolbooks and posters in Mandarin Chinese are shown extensively.

*Erasure* of Uyghur language materials in the classroom is of deep concern for my consultants, many of whom have children. Such footage reifies their concern.

#### 4.4.7 SOCIO-DIAGNOSTIC CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Another useful viewpoint on these data is Wodak and Reisigl's *socio-diagnostic critique*. It “aims to demystify potential manipulators in discourse formation and message deliverance” (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 32). The implied theme of the above news clip is that only newly built (i.e. modern Chinese-style) housing in the Old Town could withstand earthquake damage. This theme contrasts with actual earthquake damage to so-called safer structures typical of contemporary Chinese architecture, as seen in widespread damage and death in major earthquakes in China during the last four years. Such events have created doubt among my Uyghur consultants on the structural safety of their own *qewetliq öy* ‘high-rise apartment buildings.’

Regarding the *socio-diagnostic critique* of clip 2, the messenger (government education representatives) aims to advertise improvements being made to the Xinjiang bilingual education system by bringing in teachers from Shenzhen. Importing teachers

from distant provinces implies that Xinjiang is highly dependent on government (and outside) resources in order to improve education conditions. Both clips repeated the Uyghur phrase *yardem berish* ‘giving help’ frequently, positioning Xinjiang (and implicitly, Uyghurs) as being dependent and in need of aid. In the first clip, Uyghurs in Old Town needed assistance in improving living conditions and modernizing their lifestyles. N and S, my tutor, pointed out how frequently the clip describes Uyghurs as receiving help. That description is annoying to N and S, because they are not sure how much of it to believe. One of my consultants brought up the frequency of examples of Uyghur villagers receiving help after a natural disaster. They explained that typically, help comes once, is filmed, and will not come again for a while, if at all.

#### **4.4.8 PROGNOSTIC CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

The effectiveness of a message is best determined from the audience for which the discourse or message was intended. The audience's critical reaction is related to the *prognostic critique* in discourse-historical analysis (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 32).

For example, both news clips feature Russian loanwords, which my consultants did not find as bothersome. My consultants who watched clip 1 had the following evaluations:

N was satisfied that inhabitants were given three options to choose from. MM, who is from Qeshqer, stated that he believes the government is having to soften its approach in changing or rebuilding Qeshqer due to prior overwhelming discontent and an increase in international media attention of the issue. E said that retaining the original design is an interesting concept, and will provide tourists with a more authentic representation of Uyghur culture. Consultant A told me that, in general, he believed the content of the clip, but then said it was a sensitive issue – a way of suggesting more lay

beneath the surface, but he would not divulge such opinions to me.

Casual exchanges with others revealed nostalgia for times past, represented in Qeshqer's Old Town, their symbolic homeland. With regards to specific communicative commentary (*prognostic critique*), those I spoke with approved of the word choices made in the text. There were two specific word choices that I observed rarely if never in everyday interactions (in the private sphere). The most common expression for renovating (i.e. demolishing and rebuilding) a home is the code-mixed *zhuangxiu qilish* (*zhuangxiu* being Mandarin for 'to decorate' or 'to furnish'; *qilish* being Uyghur for 'to do.')

In this clip, the announcer uses the Uyghur word *bizesh* 'to decorate.' Outside of context, my consultants A and AG, along with G, could not provide an alternative term for *zhuang shou qil-*, although they were aware of its connection to Mandarin. Within a broadcast media clip, the consultants not surprisingly recalled and understood the word *bizesh*, because of substantial context clues and visual cues accompanying the text. In the video clip, the Russian term *öktebir* is used for 'October', even though in everyday conversations, the Chinese calque *oninchi ay* (lit, 'the tenth month') is more common in Ürümqi. The Russian term is, however, commonly used in books, as a dateline in newspapers and magazines, and in government memos translated into Uyghur. I observed that Uyghurs, for the most part, use a Turkic language but Mandarin calqued form for months and days of the week. Alternatively, Uyghurs also use Persian days of the week. My consultants and other individuals with whom I interacted (all *Mín kǎo mìn*) generally could not readily recite the months of the year in the Russian-derived forms utilized in mass media discourse. However, within the context of specific use in this text, they reiterated opinions that announcers and mass media serve as a tool for "reminding us of

words we may have forgotten” – in this case, Russian-derived names for months of the year. As MM put it in his interview in section 4.3 of this chapter, teachers shouldn’t make mistakes, and neither should broadcasters.

Regarding the *prognostic critique* of clip 2, MM noted the frequent usage of words assimilated from Russian (including *univérsal* ‘universal,’ *somma* ‘sum,’ *pedagogika* ‘pedagogy’), but he explained that Russian is “closer to our own language, and we got used to using Russian words in the 1980s” (his childhood). N explained that saying the term *qosh tilliq* ‘bilingual’ is fairly rare among her own acquaintances, who instead tend to use the Mandarin term *Shuāngyǔ* ‘bilingual’. N also mentioned the heavy use of numbers in the clip, and said that “no one remembers or cares about all the numbers, and they do nothing to help explain the situation.” As van Dijk found in his research in *New(s) racism: A discourse-analytical approach*, the use of numbers are “rhetorical devices to suggest precision and objectivity, and hence credibility” (van Dijk 2000: 46). However, for N and E (who also mentioned the effects of numbers), such “rhetorical devices” make the entire broadcast more difficult to follow, as if “they’re telling us numbers instead of stories” in N’s words.

#### 4.4.8 DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES UNVEILED

As Wodak and Reisigl found in their flagship study using their discourse-historical approach, “nationalist, racist discourse typically contains at least four types of discursive strategies”: constructive, preservative, transformative, and destructive (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 43). The two broadcast news clips I analyzed contained all four of these strategies.



Regarding preservative strategies, the two clips *iconize* Uyghurs as dependent and traditional, justifying the government ‘giving help’ to modernize and improve their quality of life and education standards.

Regarding transformative strategies, aimed at “changing national identities” (Wodak and Reisigl: 43), transformation of Uyghur identity occurs in the mass media in the name of modernization. Between the two clips are several lexical similarities, such as the frequent usage of the Uyghur terms *yardem berish* ‘giving help’ (referring to the government helping Uyghurs – though the ethnonym is notably absent), and *yahshilinish* ‘improve.’ The clip on changes to Qeshqer’s Old Town also includes frequent usage of *zamanlishish* ‘modernize,’ whereas in the clip on bilingual education uses expressions related to increasing the speed of language acquisition.

Regarding destructive strategies, aimed at “dismantling existing national identities or narratives” (Wodak and Reisigl 2001: 43), the absence of the ethnonym ‘Uyghur’ despite two topics that quite evidently pertain to Uyghurs, attempts to *erase* the relationship of Uyghur ethnicity to both the wholesale destruction of historic sections of Qeshqer’s Old Town, as well as the relationship of Uyghur ethnicity (and other minorities in Xinjiang) to bilingual education, and education reforms of the 2000s in general.

#### 4.5 SUMMARY

Oft-repeated strategies and ideologies such as those listed above results in a fairly negative set of expectations audiences have even before reading or listening to particular mass media stories (van Dijk 1995: 18). Several of my consultants’ comments after watching the two broadcast news clips revealed a general discontent toward the way Uyghurs are portrayed. For example, N and S explained to me that news broadcasts often

depict Uyghurs as weak and needing help, yet the help described likely never returned once camera crews left. While some of my consultants were reticent to comment in-depth on their opinions, many of them still expressed that the news always simplified issues too much, relying largely on numbers and biased interviews. S once told me that, to her, it seemed that half the news was about praising government officials or the police.

My consultants' overall opinions of broadcast news, especially of news related to Uyghurs, affects the way they process the message. However, as I have noted, views of 'purified' speech in the mass media remains positively evaluated. Despite frequent use of code-mixing in everyday speech, my consultants anticipated, and in some cases demanded, a 'pure' or Mandarin-free version of Uyghur in the mass media. Like Hoffman observed in her discussions with speakers of Tashelhit on the 'purity' of their language in the mass media, language considered 'pure' in the public sphere is seen as a symbolic representation of a "rootedness of a marginalized group" (Hoffman 2008: 200).

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

I arrived in Ürümchi entirely alone, with nothing but a hotel room booked for a week and a singular suitcase full of all my warmest clothes. I left the United States in February 2011 firmly believing I'd be back by summer of that year. I missed that projection by over a year. I knew early on it would take time and patience to fully understand Xinjiang in all its complexities. It is simply not possible to arrive in such a place and instantly begin having meaningful discussions with people. I can say with confidence that the final four months in Ürümchi, from early March to the end of June 2012, were the most enlightening and rewarding. My friends became my actual friends, as opposed to proverbial hosts who felt compelled to nourish and entertain the 'guest' as is customary. Certainly, my improved Uyghur skills helped keep conversations flowing, but that was only a small part of fostering meaningful and trusting relationships. I only hope that this thesis reflects in small bits the influences the people I met had on me.

In my thesis, I provided a background of my role and experience as an ethnographer in Ürümchi, as well as background on the Uyghurs, the Uyghur language, and Xinjiang. I highlighted contemporary change to language and culture Uyghurs are facing throughout Xinjiang, which include education reforms, 'changes' or destruction of Uyghur sections and neighborhoods of cities, and the overall fading of desired spatial boundaries between Uyghurs and the Han Chinese.

Throughout my thesis, I aimed to answer the following research questions: How are the regional media's 'purified' Uyghur language choices interpreted by Uyghur viewers in Ürümchi, a predominately Han city where Uyghur speakers themselves generally interject Mandarin in their everyday speech? How have recent changes to

material and nonmaterial components of Uyghur culture affected both language practice and language ideology?

The education reforms of the 2000s, having reduced mother-tongue language contact in the classroom significantly, have lead to increased dissatisfaction among Uyghurs toward the Han Chinese and the government in general. Contemporary research on Xinjiang points to identity formation among Uyghurs as being in opposition of the majority Han as opposed to in definition of themselves. Such conditions affect language attitudes and have strengthened ideologies Uyghurs have of their own language, including language of the mass media. I argued that Uyghurs' language ideologies on mother tongue 'purity' in the public sphere have become intensified, as can be seen in broadcast news media and viewers responses to these media.

I approached my topic in three ways. First, I engaged in long-term ethnographic research during my time studying Uyghur in Ürümqi. During my time there, I observed that Uyghurs educated in their mother tongue spoke using *intrasential* code-mixing of Mandarin and Uyghur, especially when discussing topics or genres they perceived as indexical of Han Chinese culture as opposed to their own. Such categories include housing, education, technology, and transportation, all of which have been influenced by the increasing presence of Mandarin and the Han Chinese in Xinjiang.

Second, I conducted interviews with nine Ürümqi-based Uyghur adults, ranging in age from 22 to 48. The interviews were conducted in Uyghur, and translated into English. In these interviews I asked my consultants about their preferred news sources, their opinions of language used in broadcast news, and expectations they had about their mother tongue in the mass media. Their responses revealed that mother tongue 'purity' in

this case implies an expunging of Mandarin words, even though they may be very common in everyday spoken Uyghur. Many of my consultants also compared broadcasters and the mass media to teachers, by saying that ‘pure’ language heard on television could remind them of forgotten words. My consultants appreciated hearing seldom-used Uyghur words in news broadcasts, and denounced the use of Mandarin-derived words, even those commonly used in everyday conversations and more easily understood than alternative terms. Despite perceived ‘purification’ of mass media language, my consultants’ positive evaluations of broadcast news did not carry over to actual content and meaning.

Third, I employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to two Uyghur-language broadcast news clips from Xinjiang’s regional XJTV2 channel. In particular I turned to Wodak and Reisigl’s discourse-historical approach to CDA, which aims to contextualize a discourse within the domains of discrimination, power, and dominance.

The first clip pertained to changes occurring in the city of Qeshqer’s Uyghur Old Town, and the options the government gives its inhabitants regarding relocation and modifications made to their home. The second clip presented recent investments made in Xinjiang’s ‘bilingual’ education system, which was instated in the early 2000s region-wide in an effort to increase Mandarin Chinese language levels of minority students, but done so at the expense of quality mother tongue instruction. Both of these topics weigh heavily on Uyghurs as potential threats to their identity and culture.

As Wodak and Reisigl found in their flagship study of political discourse in Austria, discourse with nationalist ideologies typically contain specific discursive strategies, including constructive, preservative, transformative, and destructive (Wodak

and Reisigl 2001: 43). The two broadcast news clips I analyzed contained these strategies. Regarding preservative strategies, the two clips *iconize* Uyghurs as dependent and traditional, justifying the government ‘giving help’ to modernize and improve their quality of life and education standards. Transformation of Uyghur identity occurs in the mass media in the name of modernization. Between the two clips are several lexical similarities, such as the frequent usage of the Uyghur terms *yardem berish* ‘giving help’ (referring to the government helping Uyghurs – though the ethnonym is notably absent), *yahshilinish* ‘improve,’ and *zamanlinish* ‘modernize.’

The absence of the ethnonym ‘Uyghur’ despite two topics that quite evidently pertain to Uyghurs, attempts to *erase* the relationship of Uyghur ethnicity to both the wholesale destruction of historic sections of Qeshqer’s Old Town, as well as the relationship of Uyghur ethnicity (and other minorities in Xinjiang) to bilingual education, and education reforms of the 2000s in general. Another example of Irvine and Gal’s notion of *erasure* is the very process of the mass media rendering code-mixing practices among Uyghurs invisible, as muddled boundaries of ethnic minority groups do not fit with the government’s essentializing ideologies, which tend toward homogenization of its 56 ethnic groups to form a patchwork yet wholly unified Chinese nation.

My consultants’ somewhat negative opinions of broadcast news, especially of news related to Uyghurs, affects the way they process the message. However, as I have noted, their opinions of ‘purified’ speech in the mass media remains positively evaluated. Like Hoffman observed in her discussions with speakers of Tashelhit on the ‘purity’ of their language in the mass media, language considered ‘pure’ in the public sphere is seen

as a symbolic representation of identity of a marginalized group in opposition with the majority, dominant group (Hoffman 2008: 200).

Throughout my thesis I mentioned Uyghurs' associations of the Han Chinese as 'dirty' – be it the non-*halal* food they eat, the knives offered to cut melon on the train, or everyday habits such as nose-blowing at the dinner table. As Uyghurs' social spheres are increasingly encroached upon by Han influences, and as desired spatial and cultural boundaries fade, they seek to strengthen their identity in opposition of the majority Han. While 'purity' of culture and language often relate to notions of nationalism, my consultants did not seek 'purity' beyond an expunging of Mandarin language influence. As I discussed in section 2.2, Adila Erkin's research on Uyghurs' consumption patterns of avoiding Chinese products, yet not rejecting other products (and implicitly, cultures) outside of China, mirrors Uyghurs' definitions and qualifications of 'pure' mother tongue in the public sphere. My anecdote with M in section 1.2, whose poignant description of her mother tongue as *qalaymiqan* 'messy' inspired the title for my thesis, reflected similar ideas of what qualifies as 'pure.' Loanwords from languages such as Russian and English did not concern M; her remorse stemmed from her own (and others') forgetting of Uyghur words in favor of Chinese words that they have become so accustomed to using and hearing.

Although everyday speech incorporates more Mandarin-derived words and code-mixing, an erasure of such an influence is desired in official representations of Uyghur, as it signals to a specific form of 'purification' of their mother tongue, and beyond that, their very identity. Prescribing and expecting mass media language to be expunged of Mandarin – and implicitly Han Chinese – influence, may allow Uyghurs "to defy with

impunity the hard realities of their social system” (Douglas 1966: 138). Much like Jaffe found in Corsican-language mass media in France, and Hoffman found in Tashelhit-language media in Morocco, mass media act as a filter for minority-language programs, ridding speech not necessarily of all loanwords, but of loanwords derived from the perceived dominant regional language.

Language practices and ideologies are intrinsically connected to sociocultural conditions. Desires for ‘pure’ language don’t stem merely from a superficial yearning for grammatical ‘correctness.’ Mandarin loanwords in the public sphere are perceived as linguistic pollution or “dirt” as Mary Douglas stated, just like material infringement on cultural practices that urban Uyghurs face on a daily basis in the form of neighborhood transformation and dramatic changes to Uyghur-language education options. My consultants’ expectations and desires for their mother tongue in the public sphere represent a tangible and permissible resistance to Chinese culture, desired perhaps on a larger yet insurmountable scale.



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